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OBITUARY

We deeply mourn the sad demise of Professor A.G.Javadekar, the eminent scholar and philosopher of India, which occurred at Vadodara (Gujarath) recently. He was 85 and was active almost till the end of his life.

Born in 1919, he received his education in Maharashtra until he earned his B.A.(Hons.) in Philosophy from the University of Bombay and went to Allahabad for his M.A. where he came under the deep influence of the mystic-saint-philosopher of Maharashtra, Prof. R.D.Ranade, who was then heading the Dept. of Philosophy in Allahabad University. This influence was a major force in his life when he carved his career as a teacher and scholarly thinker. He had Ph.D. and D.Litt. from Bomday University. Both the Works he presented respectively for these degrees viz., *An Approach To Reality* and *Axionoetics : Valuational Theory of Knowledge* were published and they have received wide acclaim for their sterling contribution to the field. He could write in Marathi with great felicity on abstruse and abstract Philosophical themes, which is evident from his two works: i) Jñānaprāmñyāche Mulyātmaka Alochana and ii) Samartha Rāmādas : Jeevān aniTattvajñāna. He also associated himself with the editorial work in such projects as Marathi Tattvajñāna Mahākosha (3 Vols.) and the Indian Cultural History (12 Vols.) He has published around 250 papers in as many as in four languages : English, Marathi, Gujarathi and Hindi. All this voluminous work he did while he was doing his teaching work and holding at the same time several important offices which made heavy demands on him. He was Joint Secretary of the Indian Philosophical Congress for six years followed by another six years of the Chairmanship of the Executive Body of the IPC. He was General President of the Congress at Bhubaneshawar. He was also Chairman of 1975 World Philosophere' Meet in Delhi. He was Vice-President of the Akhil Bharatiya Darshana Parishad for several years and also an Associate Editor of their Quarterly. In view of his long meritorious services to the academic world of Indian philosophers, Dr, Jawadekar was chosen as the President for the two Annual Sessions of the Darshan Parishad held in Jodhpur and Udaipur-certainly a rare honour being conferred twice. His contribution to the Indian Council of Philosophical Research as its distinguished Member for six years was indeed noteworthy. As a result, he was appointed an expert Member on the Central Govt. Committee appointed for finalising philosophical Terminology in Hindi. He was also a founder member and patron of the Maharashtra Tattvajñāna Parishad. The credit for establishing Gujarath Tattvajñāna Parishad and guiding its affairs for years as its Executive Chairman certainly goes to him. He was closely associated with several literary, Social and Cultural organizations of the City of Baroda- the place of his life's work and worship.

Dr. Jawadekar was a contributor to IPQ and in his passing away we have lost an inspiring fatherly figure of immense experience.

Chief Editor

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SILENCE

K. Gopinathan

"Kleist wrote somewhere that what the poet would most of all like to be able to do would be to convey thoughts by themselves without words."

(Ludwig Wittgenstein : *Culture & Value* P.15)

A 'realm of silence; or a realm of the unutterable is a central theme in both the early and later period of Ludwig Wittgenstein. But, the methodological compulsions for this 'silence', as a realm of higher values, are different in both these periods. Our contention is that, as in the case of the style of writing the 'realm of the unutterable' is logical development from the theoretical positions of *Tractatus - Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations,* the representative works of earlier and later periods respectively.

According to the Wittgensteinian version of correspondence theory, i.e. the picture theory of language, propositions are pictures depicting the actual state of affairs. The relationship between a language and the world of facts is largely ostensive in nature. The utterable propositions, according to this can be divided into two, analytic and synthetic. The first group of propositions, which can be uttered meaningfully, is essentially tautological statements of the mathematical and the logical sciences. The synthetic propositions picture the existing states of affairs and they are empirically verifiable. Such propositions show 'what is' the case. This is the limit of language that Wittgenstein is referring to in the *Tractatus*. Anything beyond the empirical reality, i.e. the higher sphere of values, cannot be meaingfully uttered in language. Language is structurally incapable of expressing a realm of the sensory experience. Hence he suggests that, 'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.'[1]

But, for Wittgenstein, the limit does not mean the end of everything or an emptiness, in which case he would have ended up as another positivist. For him, the boundary of language, the limit of the utterable, is a pointer towards a realm of possibilities. This crucial aspect of difference between logical positivists and Wittgenstein is brought out by his friend Paul Engelmann as follows :

> The difference is only that they have nothing to be silent about. Positivism holds - and this is its essence - that what we can speak about is all that matters in life. *Whereas Wittgenstein passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view,* we must be silent about. [2]

Obviously, there is a tremendous difference between the declaration of Logical positivists that 'metaphysics is meaningless' and Wittgensteinian position on the realm of the unutterable.

Wittgenstein is not denying the realm of higher values, like God, Good and Evil, Justice and Virtue etc. What he is rejecting is the systematically elaborated metaphysical discourses on this transcendental realm. Accoŕding to *Tractatus,* we can speak only about the empirical reality and the tautologous truths. Metaphysical discourses are attempts to rupture the boundaries of language. According to him the attempt to conceptualise an area that we must be silent about is bound to fail. Thus, it can be said that, for Wittgenstein, 'silence' means the end of concepts or categories of understanding and not an end of the communication. 'Silence' manifests itself through the utterable, as poetry "conveys thoughts by themselves without words". [3] Thanking Paul Engelmann for a poem Wittgenstein expresses this idea as follows : "If only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then nothing gets lost. But the unutterable will be - unutterable - contained in what has been uttered."[4]

It is more a reluctance to produce a meta-narrative on the transcendental. For him, the utterable is a medium through which the unutterable is manifested. By delimiting the 'island of the utterable', he tries to show the vastness of the ocean of the unutterable. It stands, as aŕ 'other', refusing to be 'trapped' in the vulgar eloquence of a period of 'meaningless hubble'. His silence is the starting point of a new set of possibilities and can be decoded only within a new ethical horizon. In a

letter to his friend Ludwig Von Ficker, Wittgenstein says that *Tractatus Logio-Philosophiucs* has got two parts one written and the other unwritten. Among these, he considers the latter part as important, because this unwritten part of the book is actually a circumscription of the ethical which he leaves to the realm of silence. He concludes the letter like this; "In brief, I think; all that which many are *babbling* today I have defined, in my book by remaining silent about it".[5]

The silence, which is a permanent countertext in Wittgenstein, is a conscious choice of a person who confronts the limits of linguistic expression within an estranged 'form of life'. In such a culture the very process of communication itself is a masking mechanism. The 'babble of the many' or the one dimensional flow of information, is a strategy to strangulate any authentic communication.

Wittgenstein's silence is an inner space to withdraw from the surrounding hypocritical culture and its multiple manifestations. According to him it is impossible to articulate this 'space' without losing the spiritual essence of it. He expresses this idea with a characteristic metaphor as follows:

> If you have a room which you do not want certain people to get
> into, put a lock on it for which they do not have the key. But there is
> no point in talking to them about it, unless of course you want them
> to acquire the room from outside.[6]

This makes the exploration into 'the room of silence' an exercise in archaeological analysis. Language can at the most just leave you 'there' at the boundaries of this space, or at the coast line beyond which lies the ocean of silence. This is what he meant by saying "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world".

In short, the picture theory of *Tractatus* is the methodological pre-condition of a 'realm of silence' in early Wittgenstein. Since language can picture only the existing state-of-affairs, the realm of 'ought', the realm of future possibilities, is not a subject that can be expressed in language. The moral will or the ethical projects of humanity lie outside the boundaries of language. He says "The meaning of life i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God... To pray is to think about the meaning of life. I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will. I am completely powerless..[8]

The mystical surrender, before an inexpressible God, an unutterable meaning of life, is the leitmotif of the *Tractatus*. The whole problem of reality is reduced to the mental afflictions of a person, which is complementary to this mysticism. For example, he says in *Tractatus* : "The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man".[9] If one cannot, as he says in the *Notebooks,* "bend the happenings of the world", in other words, the world of facts, the only option left is to change your mental attitude towards the world, thus creating an 'entirely different' world for yourself. The same world of facts has a different significance for a 'happy man'. But, since both of them are 'completely powerless' they 'cannot bend the happening of the world'. The facts of the world exist as neutral entities without any value dimension and the meaning of life essentially lies in the ethical attitude of the moral agents. The *status quo* of the real world is maintained in tact and the problem of meaning of life is unutterable.

As C.A. Van Peursen says :

What was said earlier in connection with the *Notebooks,* now acquires a new perspective; the world of fact, "The world of meaningful language where language may correspond with states of affairs and assumes a logical structure allows no room for the will, moral values or questions of happiness and the meaning of life. This is what Schopenhauer called the world and Idea.[10]

The world as my world, which is identical with life, is changeable with a moral will but not the outside factual world. But even this moral world will not allow itself to be articulated into a rational metaphysical system. At this point Wittgenstein moves a step further than Immanuel Kant who struck a balance by making the realm of ethical as realm of regulative ideals.

For Wittgenstein, the realm of the ethical is an area about which one must resort to silence. As Van Peursen says, "Wittgenstein believes that, whereas one cannot alter the course of things in the universe, one can change one's view of it. This idea is also to be found in Spinoza, and, in some respects, goes back to the stoic view of life."[11] Life, the meaning of life, the higher values etc., are outside history, outside the spatio-temporal and logical relations. And these are the problems about which we cannot produce rational propositions and they belong to the mystical. Wittgenstein

says, "There are indeed, things that cannot be put into words.. They are what is mystical."[12] That means, Wittgensteinian silence negates the limited role which Kant was ready to assign to philosophy, the role of expressing the ultimate reality as practical ideals.

In the absence of a 'categorical imperative.' Wittgenstein demands 'purity of heart,' from each individual to guide his life. The methodological positivism of *Tractatus* with a blend of Jewish Christian mysticism leads him to the absolute denial of an absolutist metaphysics. "The proposition can express nothing that is higher."[13] This is the point at which one must transform oneself and practice the values of the higher realm. Then there is no significance in asking for articles of faith or for metaphysical system.

II

The nonsensicality of the expression of 'the higher', in the form of metaphysics, continues as the central theoretical position in the later phase of Wittgenstein's philosophy. But now the methodological paradigm has changed radically and equally important is the change in positions regarding cultural and historical problems. Between the world wars the world transformed unrecognizably. All the socio-political, cultural and intellectual movements of this period had their impact on Wittgenstein's thinking. His active intellectual career falls in between the first and the second world wars, which naturally added to the deep melancholic mood ingrained into his personality. His Jewish lineage, repeated tragedies in the family, the strong influence of Spengler and his own disgust towards a civilization based on instrumental rationality deepened the feeling of resignation that he already had in him.[14]

According to Wittgenstein the modern European civilization which can be "characterised by the word 'progress' and occupied with building an ever more complicated structure"[15] is on the decline. The root cause of this decline is the scientific mode of thinking and his "way of thinking is different from theirs (scientists)"[16]. In the context of the mounting opposition to the atom bomb during the second world war, Wittgenstein was even ready to welcome the bomb as a bitter medicine that "offers a prospect of the end, the destruction, of an evil, our disgusting soapy water science". [17] The following remark on science both as a methodology and as a civilization, establishes, without any doubt, Wittgenstein's opposition to a civilization

based on science and technology. He says :

> It is not absurd for example, to believe that the age of science and
> technology is the beginning of the end for humanity; that the idea
> of great progress is delusion, along with the idea that the truth will
> ultimately be known; that there is nothing good or desirable about
> scientific knowledge and that mankind, in seeking it, is falling into a
> trap. It is by no means obvious that this is not how things are.[18]

All these, beyond dispute, establish the fact that he was completely
alien to the mainstream European civilisation and he can justifiably be
associated with the spiritual exiles like Nietzche, Kierkegaard, Pascal,
Tolstoy etc. It was a period in which a significant section of the European
intellectuals wished to 'flee' from the 'civilization' and was in search of a
spiritual alternative. This shows as Fania Pascal says, that Wittgenstein
belonged very much to his time and place. She says in her memoir that the
"... idealisation of Russia he shared with many Central European
intellectuals of his time"[19] was a natural outcome of a desperate need for
a spiritual refuge. The idea of Russia as a spiritual refuge had fascinated
him for a long time.

Wittgenstein's conversations with friends and their memoirs, provide
satisfactory evdences for this contempt of a civilization that, according to
him, is steadily degenerating. He was completely in agreement with the
spirit of Spengler's book, *The Decline of The West* which, according to
him, "will teach... about the age we were now living in".[20] The observation
that the age in which we live "Wolves eat lambs",[21] is absolutely true to
the nature of aggressive capitalism. Hitler's ascension to political power in
Germany is described by Wittgenstein as "government taken over by
gangsters".[22] The mass annihilation of Jews and the subsequent events
which culminated in the second world war tremendously influenced the
intellectual life of that generation. In Wittgenstein's case these developments
led to the total estrangement from western civilization and by this time he
firmly believed that "dark ages are coming again".[23]

Wittgenstein's objection to contemporary world and the modern
European civilisation in general, can be summarised as follows : Firstly, as
he comments on Frazer's analysis of primitive societies, contemporary
world is "far removed from the understanding of a spiritual matter".[24]
Secondly, he objects to the modern belief in "the historical explanation, the

explanation as a hypothesis of development, and building of "ever complicated structures."[25] His third objection is to the privileging of scientific rationality as 'the' true methodology and considering of all others as primitive. His rejection of the idea of a logically perfect language and the picture theory of language in general is intrinsically connected to these objections.

In the later period Wittgenstein believed that the ordinary language of every day use is perfect as it is. The 'limits' of language are operational in nature and intrinsic to the grammatical system. As P.S.Hacker says, "No language, as it were, is incomplete from within. It is what it is. If it provides no means for certain type of discourse, then it is silent".[26] The range of the possibilities of the language games is infinite, of course, within the ambit of the rules of the game. This is a significant paradgmatic shift in Wittgenstein's thinking on language in the latter half of his life.

The crucial feature of this shift is that among the infinitely possible language-games no one can privilege itself over other. It is a democratic coexistence of multiple language-games. Since there is no room for a private language in his scheme, an individual who is alienated from the existing language-games and who cannot obey the rules of the game is left with the only option of withdrawing, into the realm of spiritual silence. Wittgenstein all through his life was such an oursider to the games of the mainstream western civilisation. He expresses his deep spiritual alienation in the following words :

> It is very *remarkable* that we should be inclined to think of civilisation, houses, trees, cars etc. as separating man from his origins, from what is lofty and eternal, etc., our civilised environment, along with its trees and plants, strikes us then as though it were cheaply wrapped in cellophane and isolated from everything great, from God, as it were.[27]

In a world, that went against its own gods, values and ideals, thinkers like Wittgenstein attempt to restore a 'higher' sphere. The restoration of the realm of values is not through the production of systematic treatises but by remaining silent about it, which makes this a novel philosophical move. In his move against the philosophical habit of articulation of the inarticulable Wittgenstein comes closer to Immanuel Kant, who more or less in a similar way preserves the realm of the higher or noumena, from

the reach of the categories of understanding. Both of them denied the efficacy of a rational, theoretical and systematic metaphysics of the practical ideals. Wittgenstein elevated the sublime above the access of the 'earthly language-games' and maintained a mystic silence about it.

Terry Eagleton's comment on Wittgenstein's later philosophy is significant in this context. He says that "the *Investigations* are a voice in dialogue with itself and as implied 'other'. Silence as an 'implied other' is the constant presence in Wittgenstein who makes articulated discourse a medium to express and make evident this other".[28] That means, in Wittgensteinian writings silence is a language exiled within the language, a permanent countertext. The 'higher' realm is not something to be 'talked about', it is something to be manifested through the utterable, and through the activities of an ethically conscious human being. The ideals are to be lived or practised, not something to be preached. Wittgenstein says that "... ethical reward and ethical punishment... must reside in the action itself."[29]

Rational discourse is possible, Kant says, only about phenomenal reality, i.e., about perceptible reality. Or in the latter day terminology, language-games are possible to the extent permitted by the rules of grammar. The rules of ordinary language, according to Wittgenstein, do not allow metaphysical language-games. Hence, we may be compelled to conclude that, there entails a sort of dualism of the utterable and the unutterable. The modern European philosophy is dominated by the tension between science and religion, between the material and the spiritual. In the early stage of his philosophizing, Wittgenstein maintained an uneasy balance between the realms of the utterable physical reality and the unutterable spiritual being.

In the later period, Ludwig Wittgenstein was engaged in an all out war against scientific methodology and against rational explanatory discourses in general. He says : "What I need is *certainty* not wisdom, dreams, or speculation and this certainty is faith".[30] This makes his professed struggle against all sorts of philosophical dualisms very suspicious and it appears that, he also turns out to be a victim of what Jacques Derrida calls 'the metaphysics of presence' the dualistic mode of thinking which plagued the entire European history. It seems, his struggle against the metaphysical is an incomplete project and the enemy is down but not out.

This is sufficiently clear when he says that in silence, "the softest philosophical thought can be spoken and heard without being drowned in the noise."[31]

NOTES

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* D.F.Pears and B.F McGuinness trans (London : Routledge, 1988) Paper back edition reprint p.74

2. Poul Engelmenn, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a Memoir*, L.Furtmuller trans. (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 97.

3. See : Epigraph, p. 1.

4. Engelmann, *op.cit*, p. 7.

5. C.G.Luckhardt ed. *Wittgenstein : Source and Perspectives,* Bruce Gillete trans. (Hasssock, Sussex, 1979), pp. 94-85.

6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture And Value,* G.H.Von Wright ed., Peter Winch trans. (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 7.

7. Wittgenstein, *op.cit*, note 1, p. 56.

8. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Note Books :* 1914-16, G.H. Von Wright ed., G.E.M. Anscombe trans (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1979), p. 73.

9. Wittgensteinm *op.cit*, n.1. p. 72.

10. C.A.Van Peursen *Ludwig Wittgenstein : An Introduction to his Philosophy,* Rex. Ambler tran (London : Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 65.

11. *Ibid*. p. 68.

12. Wittgenstein, *op.cit*.n.1, p. 73.

13. *Ibid*. p. 71.

14. See the memoirs of friends like Paul Engelmann, Fania Pascal, Norman Malcolm etc. and the published letters of Wittgenstein.

15. Wittgenstein, *op.cit*, n.6, p. 7.

16. *Ibid*.

17. *Ibid*, 9.49.

18. *Ibid*, p.56.

19. Fania Pascal, 'Wittgenstein : A Personal Memoir; *op.cit*. n.5, p.55.

20. Rush Rhees ed., *Recollections of Wittgenstein* (Oxford : University Press, 1984), p.113.

21. *Ibid*, p. 116.

22. *Ibid*.

23.   *Ibid.*

24.   Ludwing Wittgenstein, "Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough", *op.cit.* n.5, p.69.

25.   *Ibid.*

26.   G.P.Baker and P.M.S.Hacker, *An Analytical Commentary on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* Vol. 1 (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 27.

27.   Wittgenstein, n. 6, p.50.

28.   Terry Eagleton, *Against the Grain : Essay 1975-1985* (London, New York: Verso, 1986) p.118.

29.   Wittgenstein, *op.cit.*n.1. p.72.

30.   Wittgenstein, *op.cit.*n.6. p.33.

31.   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel,* G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H.Von Wright ed., G.E.M. Anscombe trans. (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 80.

PAUL RICOEUR'S INTERPRETATION THEORY

A. Joseph Dorairaj

Paul Ricoeur in "The Task of Hermeneutics" glosses the term "hermeneutics" as "the theory of the operation of understanding of texts"[1] Ricoeur's goal is to expound a theory of hermeneutics founded on the problematic of the text, and it needs to be underlined that his hermeneutics of the text has been heavily influenced by the speech-act theories of Austin and Searle. His choice of the linguistics of discourse or message which focuses on the sentence in contrast to the linguistics of discourse or message which focuses on the sentence in contrast to the linguistics of language or code wherein the phonological or lexical sign is the basic unit leads him to work out his hermeneutics of the text within the framework of the "dialectic of event and meaning".[2]

Ricoeur's interpretation theory revolves around four themes as enunciated in "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation" : "(1) the text as a relation of speech to writing; (2) the text as a structured work; (3) the text as the projection of a world; and (4) the text as mediating self-understanding".[3]

Since Ricoeur's hermeneutics of the text is bound up with the linguistics of discourse and speech-acts, it is essential to throw some light on the terms "discourse" and "speech-acts'. Approaching discourse from both a formalist-structural perspective and a functionalist-pragmatic standpoint, Deborah Schriffin, in *Approaches to Discourse,* writes that discourse has often been understood in two different ways : "a structure, i.e. a unit of language that is larger than the sentence; and the realization of functions, i.e. as the use of language for social, expressive, and referential purposes'.[4] With regard to the ambience of discourse, David Crystal points out in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* that it

includes "a study of the factors [both linguistic and communicative competence] which facilitate linguistic interaction."[5]

Ricoeur's interpretation theory is built on the distinction between language and discourse. Borrowing the insights of Emile Benveniste, he brings in a sharp distinction between the linguistics of language and the linguistic of discourse wherein the sign (semiotic system) and the sentence (semantic system) are the basic units respectively.[6] He makes it abundantly clear that his focus is the linguistics of discourse, and pays special attention to the transition from oral to written discourse, particularly those "traits of discourse [which] are significantly altered by the passage from speech to writing".[7]

In "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation" he clarifies that discourse is the "event" of language (its dialectical counterpart being meaning), and points out that "if all discourse is actualized as event, all discourse is understood as meaning".[8] Elaborating the hermeneutics of the event and of discourse, Ricoeur in "The Model of the Text : Meaningful Action Considered as a Text"[9] and in "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation"[10] lists four characteristics which constitute discourse as an event.

Firstly, discourse is realized temporally in actual time in contrast to the language system which is only virtual and exists outside of time. Ricoeur remarks that Benveniste calls this the "instance of discourse". Secondly, discourse is self-referential, for any discourse can refer back to its speaker by means of personal pronouns. In "Creativity in Language," he clarifies that "the instance of discourse refers to a hearer to whom it is addressed as the second person. This I-Thou structure of discourse belongs to the semantic order and has no place in semiotic systems".[11] Thirdly, discourse refers to the actual world whereas in language as a system signs are trapped and enclosed within the system. Therefore, "it is in discourse that the symbolic function of language is actualized."[12] Fourthly, in discourse there is an interlocutor. "In this sense, discourse alone has not only a world, but an other-another person, an interlocutor to whom it is addressed."[13] These four traits throw into sharp relief the transition from competence to performance, or the "movement of effectuation from language to discourse."[14]

The transition from speech to writing has been mapped out by Ricoeur

in *Interpretation Theory and the Surplus of Meaning* in terms of antinomies such as message and medium, message and speaker, message and hearer, message and code, and message and reference. The most obvious change in the passage from speech to writing is the fixation of discourse in writing. The dialectical tension between speech and writing has been highlighted by Ricoeur who remarks, "it is because discourse only exists in a temporal and present instance of discourse that it may flee as speech or be fixed in writing."[15]

Secondly, the dialogical situation of speech which is characterized by immediacy and self-referentiality is exploded in writing. While the author's intention and the meaning of the text overlap and coincide in spoken discourse there is a gap between mental significance and written significance when speech is inscribed in writing. In "The Model of the Text" Ricoeur remarks that in writing "the text's career escapes the finite horizon of its author. What the text says now matters more than what the author meant to say, and every exegesis unfolds its procedures within the circumference of a meaning that has broken its moorings to the psychology of its author"[16] thus leading to semantic autonomy and polyvalence.

Thirdly, distanciation concerns the relation between meaning and reference, and it stems from the absence of the dialogical situation that is obliterated by writing. John Thompson in *Critical Hermeneutics : A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jurgen Habermas* comments that this form of distanciation "concerns the emancipation of the text from the limits of ostensive reference." He adds, "Unlike spoken discourse, in which the referential impact of what is said is restricted by the dialogical situation, in the case of writing this restriction is abolished".[17]

Fourthly, written discourse is noted for its "universalization of the audience". It has to be underscored that the logical correlate of semantic autonomy is the "universalization of the audience", for once the text is freed from the tutelage of its author, it is potentially open to a limitless audience. "A written text," notes Ricoeur in *Interpretation Theory,* "is addressed to an unknown reader and potentially to whoever knows how to read".[18]

Ricoeur has highlighted the fact that the passage and transition from speech to writing breeds distanciation *(Verfremdung)* or alienation. The crucial question that has to be addressed here is : In this transition is there

A. JOSEPH DORAIRAJ

any spillage of meaning ? At this juncture, Ricoeur introduces the theory of speech-acts by J.L.Austin and John R.Searle.

Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* and Searls's *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* are noted for their original contribution in the field of speech-acts. Searle in *Speech Acts* furnishes a comprehensive definition of "speech acts or linguistic acts or language acts."[19] He writes that "the production or issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act."[20] Moving from generalization to particularization, he notes that "speaking a language is performing speech acts, such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions... and so on," which include abstract acts too "such as referring and predicting".[21]

After equating speech acts with performative utterances, Austin, in his Lecture IX, spells out the various dimensions of the performative utterance : the locutionary act, the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act. However, Searle in *Speech Acts* voices his dissatisfaction over Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts, and puts down four acts in contrast to Austin's three. Austin writes :

> In saying something.. we perform a locutionary act, which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense. Secondly, we.. all perform illocutionary acts such as informing, ordering, warning.. i.e. utterances which have a certain (conventional) force. Thirdly, we may also perform perlocutionary act : what we bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading.[22]

Though the illocutionary act is built on the locutionary act, it should not be understood as "a consequence of the lacutionary act," cautions Austin[23]. With regard to perlocutionary acts, he writes that the "response achieved or the sequel could be through locutionary or non-locutinary [non-verbal] means."[24]

Schriffin declares that "the illocutionary force of an utterance [is] the very bedrock of speech act theory."[25] This illocutionary force is conveyed verbally through indices like intonation patterns and the choice of the performative verbs, and non-verbally through gestures and body-

language, particularly through facial expressions and the communicative context. These illocutionary acts are oriented towards the "reference" pole and "are essentially," according to H.G.Widdowson, "social activities which relate to the world outside the discourse."[36]

When speech is inscribed and fixed as writing, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts receive a setback. Austin notes that "these features of spoken language [i.e. the variations in meaning through different intonation patterns] are not reproducible readily in written language" and adds that "punctuation, italics, and word-order may help, but they are rather crude."[27]

But hermeneutically the inscription of speech in writing has positive and productive consequences and ramifications. Though the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts lose a good deal of their force in the transition from speech to writing this, indirectly, paves the way for liberating the text from the dialogical situation and self-reflexivity, which characterize illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. In other words, though linguistically and para-linguistically there is some loss at the communicative level, there is a considerable gain hermeneutically, for, in writing, the text is distanced from the author's intention, the original situation of discourse and the original addressee. In Ricoeurian perspective, the three-fold distanciation introduced by writing are : "(1) distanciation from the author; (2) from the situation of discourse; (3) from the original audience".[28] In this process the text becomes autonomous. Therefore, distanciation needs to be looked at as something positive and productive in hermeneutical terms.

In writing, the text is freed from all authorial bonds. The text now becomes an autonomous and sovereign entity. In *Interpretation Theory,* Ricoeur writes, "inscription becomes synonymous with the semantic autonomy of the text".[29] and adds, "the text's career escapes the finite horizon lived by its author. What the text means now matters more than what the author meant when he wrote it".[30]

In addition to depscholoization there is decontextualization of the text, for the text transcends not only *mens auctoris* but also the original situation of discourse. Ricoeur writes, "In the same manner that the text frees its meaning from the tutelage of the mental intention, it frees its reference from the limits of ostensive reference. For us, the world is the ensemble of references opened up by the texts."[31]

Thanks to the emancipation of the text from auctorial intention and the original situation of discourse, it now has a virtually universal audience, for the text is potentially open to 'any' reader and consequently to a plurality of readings, each anchored in the reader's particular horizon. Ricoeur clarifies, "In escaping the momentary character of the event-the bounds lived by the author and the narrowness of ostensive reference - discourse escapes the limits of being face to face. It is no longer a visible auditor. An unknown, invisible reader has become the unprivileged addressee of the discourse."[32]

How is distanciation construed in Ricoeurian interpretation theory ? "In Recoeurian hermeneutics," comments Dorairaj, "alienating distanciation is not looked upon negatively in a historicist manner as that which needs to be overcome or bridged. On the contrary, distanciation turns out to be the very condition of interpretation because it paves the way for semantic autonomy".[33] In other words, distanciation is considered productive, for it liberates the text from its psycho-social ties, and in the bargain, universalizes the text, thus creating possibilities for pluralism in interpretation which leads to 'surplus' in meaning.

The concept of "productive distanciation" has eloquently been articulated by Severino Croatto who argues that "the greater the distance, the more fertile the potential for plumbing the depths of the 'reservoir of meaning' of text." He adds that "from a 'historicist' point of view, this is astounding, because distance appears to be inversely proportional to accuracy with respect to the original meaning. But from the hermeneutic point of view, distanciation is a fertile, creative phenomenon".[34]

It has to be pointed out that there is a Heideggerian dimension to Ricoeur's interpretation theory. "To interpret," notes Ricoeur in "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation", is to explicate a sort of being - in - the - world unfolded in from of the text."[35] In *Interpretation Theory*, he asserts that writing projects a world. According to him, writing "projects the outline of new ways of being in the world".[36] Towards the end of the same book, he notes that "interpretation is the process by which disclosure of new modes of being ... gives to the subject a new capacity of knowing himself."[37] It has to be underlined that this projection of a world leads to a new possibility of being-in-the-world within the Heideggerian framework wherein *Dasein* is "primarily Being-possible"[38] and whose possibilities and

potentialities are disclosed in the world.

The ultimate stage in Ricoeurian hermeneutics is appropriation or assimilation, for any interpretation should eventually enhance the reader's self-understanding. To Ricoeur, any interpretive activity is intimately related to self-understanding, for text-interpretation proves to be a detour to self-understanding. Ricoeur himself in his conversation with Kearney has stated : "It is by an understanding of the worlds, actual and possible, opened by language that we may arrive at a better understanding of ourselves."[39]

NOTES

1. Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," Trans. David Pellauer, *Philosophy Today,* 18 (1973), p. 1.

2. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Functions of Distanciation," Trans. David Pellauer, *Philosophy Today,* 17.2 (1973), p. 131.

3. *Ibid.,* 130.

4. Deborah Schriffin, *Approaches to Discourse,* Blackwell, Oxford and Cambridge, 1994, p. 339.

5. David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language,* Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1995, p. 285.

6. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," Trans, David Pellaures *Philosophy today* 17.2 (1973) p.131.

7. *Ibid.,* 103.

8. *Ibid.,* 131.

9. Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text : Meaningful Action considered as a Text," *New Literary History,* 5.1 (1973), p. 92.

10. Ricoeur, "The Hermenneutical Function of Distanciation," Trans, David Pellaures *Philosophy today* 17.2 (1973) p. 131.

11. Paul Ricoeur, "Creativity in Language : word, Polysemy, Metaphor," Trans. David Pellauer, *Philosophy Today,* 17.2 (1973), p. 99.

12. Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text," p. 92.

13. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," p. 93.

14. Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text," p. 92.

15. Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory : Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning,* Texas Christian UP, Texas, 1976, p. 26.

16. Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text," p. 95.

17. John B. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics : A Study in the Thought of*

Paul Ricoeur and Jurgen Habermas, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1981, p. 52-53.

18.   Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory,* p. 13.

19.   John R. Searle, *Speech Act : An Essay in the Philosophy of Language,* Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1980, p. 4.

20.   *Ibid.,* 16.

21.   *Ibid.*

22.   J.L.Austin, *How to Do Things with Words,* Ed. J.O.Urmson and Marina Sbisa Harward UP, Cambridge, 1975, p. 109.

23.   *Ibid.,* 114.

24.   *Ibid.,* 119.

25.   Schrifin, *Approaches to Discourse,* p. 347.

26.   H.G.Widdowson, *Explorations in Applied Linguistics,* Oxford UP, Oxford, 1985, p. 138.

27.   Austin, *How to Do Things with Words,* p. 74.

28.   Ricoeru, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," p. 134.

29.   Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory,* p. 29.

30.   *Ibid.,* 30.

31.   Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text," p. 96.

33.   Joseph Dorairaj, "Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics of the Text," *Indian Philosophical Quarterly,* 27.4 (2000), p. 405.

34.   Severino Croatto, *Biblical Hermeneutics : Toward A Theory of Reading as the Production of Meaning,* Trans, Robert R. Barr, Orbis Books, New York, 1987, p. 35.

35.   Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," p. 140.

36.   Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory,* p. 37.

37.   *Ibid.,* 94.

38.   Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* Trans, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Harper & Row Publisher, New York and Evanston, 1962, p. 183.

39.   Richard Kearney, *Dialogue with Contemporary Continental Thinkers : The Phenomenologicl Heritage,* Manchester UP, Manchester, 1984, p. 45.

BEYOND CONCEPTUAL RELATIVISM ?

[RE-ENGAGING DAVIDSON]

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The contemporary age is the age of pluralism or relativism - shall we call it postmodernism ? - since many traditional doctrines postulating eternal truths have been subjected to attack. The traditionally accepted foundations of truth, objectivity, knowledge, science and morality have crumbled down. There seems to be a rush to embrace various forms of relativism. Feyerabend developed a relativist philosophy that undermines the basis of reason. In his words :

> Reason has been a great success among philosophers who dislike
> complexity and among·politicians who do not mind adding a little
> class to their struggle for world domination. It is a disaster for the
> rest, i.e. practically all of us. It is time we bid it farewell.[1]

Relativists rejected the so-called scientific realism and absolutism based on reason. Feyerabend claims : "my aim is to show that relativism is reasonably human and more widespread than is commonly assumed."[2]

According to Richard Rorty, truth is culture bound. As he says there is no such thing as a language - to world relationship. Davidson sees that relationship as a holistic one. Cultural relativists say that there are multiple cultural societies in the history of mankind and each culture develops its own rational order. Therefore, the appeal to a universal reason and universal culture is based on a philosophical myth. No culture, however primitive, is worse than any other is, since it has its own secret to good and happy life.[3] The culture in this sense is not a truly objective phenomenon. It is pervaded by the subjective elements.

The notion of conceptual scheme has taken different models in the

writings of Davidson. According to him :

> Conceptual schemes.. are ways of organizing experience; they are
> systems of categories that give form to the data of sensation; they
> are points of view from which individuals, cultures, or periods
> survey the passing scene. There may be no translating from one
> scheme to another, in which case the beliefs, desires, hopes and
> bits of knowledge that characterize one person have no true
> counterparts for the subscriber to another scheme. Reality itself is
> relative to a scheme : what counts as real in one system may not in
> another.[4]

Davidson introduces the notion of conceptual and linguistic holism. According
to him, communication or interaction is possible only if we accept a unified
conceptual scheme. It is impossible to interact among people if we accept
different world-views. Davidson has said that truth and other categories
are commonly shared by all human beings. We can thus translate one
language into another as we have a universal thought structure common to
languages.

.Davidson undertakes to analyze and systematize our conceptual
scheme. He has provided a well-defined idea of conceptual scheme.
Davidson's concept of language is very much related to his idea of conceptual
scheme. For him, there is no dichotomy between language and reality. He
blurred the distinction between scheme and content[5] and developed the
notion of a unified conceptual scheme corresponding to our thought, beliefs
and logical postulates. His idea of conceptual scheme includes our thoughts
and categories through which we can understand the world. It is an
interesting issue to see how Davidson attacks relativism and how
successfully he establishes a conceptual and linguistic holism.

Against Relativism

The absolutism-relativism controversy in contemporary philosophy
has spread throughout the intellectual, linguistic, scientific, social and cultural
life of contemporary man. It affects almost every discipline and every
aspect of our life. This indicates that there is a genuine conflict within our
conceptual framework between our absolutistic assumptions and the
relativistic practices. As Bernstein says :

> Where we reflect on the nature of science, or alien societies, or
> different historical epochs or sacred and literary texts, we hear voice

telling us that there are no hard "facts of the matter" and that almost "anything goes."[6]

When we focus on subjects like rationality, truth, knowledge, norms and reality, we confronted with incommensurable paradigms, theories, conceptual schemes and forms of life. According to the relativists, it will be an illusion if we think that there is some universal framework, some neutral language, some permanent standards through which we can understand our own social practices. As Richard Rorth claims, there are no "perennial and eternal problems".[7] 'Truth', according to him, is based on culture, Bernstein writes :

> The problem is not just an intellectual one, nor is it restricted to parochial disputes about the meaning and scope of rationality. At issue are some of the most perplexing questions concerning human beings : what we are, what you can know, what norms ought to bind us, what are the grounds for hope.[8]

Relativism has a long history. It has been propounded and defended in all ages. This is not only a contemporary debate, but has also been with us ever since the origin of western philosophy. Plato's attack on the Sophists and on Protagoras' alleged relativism[9] is a case in point. But it is only in recent times that the complex issues have become obsessive and have spread to every area of human inquiry and life.

Relativists have made a wide variety of claims. They have especially claimed that we have different languages and different conceptual schemes such that there is no single way in which we can think about the world. So, for them, there are not only many conceptual schemes but also many worlds. Conceptual relativism they argue, is not a very interesting issue. So, Davidson said, "conceptual relativism is a heady and exotic doctrine, or would be if we could make good sense of it'.[10] Relativistic doctrine is not only seemingly false but also absurd. Relativists claim that our concepts differ from language to language and so we can never share a common conceptual structure. As Kuhn and Feyerabend have advocated, such a conceptual relativism ends up in conceptual incommensurability.

People may use different languages but there is a single thought-structure, which is common to all languages. For instance, people may speak different languages like English, French, German, Hindi etc., but

they are all alike being languages. Speakers also have a common way of thinking. They all express a common conceptual scheme. The languages may vary but there is a common thought structure which all languages share. People may utter different noises with the same meaning, such as *cat* in English, *chat* in French, *katze* in German and *billi* in Hindi.

People may use different words for expressing their ideas, but all have a common stock of ideas. It is not that all languages have uniformly the same stock, but each is capable of expressing an idea, which a neighboring language has. Languages are so structured that they can express any idea, which can be expressed linguistically at all. For instance, the Hopi conception of 'time' is not different from ours. We can express the Hopi idea in our language just as the Hopis can express our idea of time in theirs.

Feyerabend, the cultural relativist, has advocated a theory that people may react variously encountering unfamiliar races, cultures, customs etc. According to him :

> Being equipped with a brain and mouth they not only feel, they also talk, they articulate their emotions and try to justify them.[11]

Also he says that diversity is beneficial while uniformity reduces our intellectual and emotional resources into monotony.[12] People may live variously according their wish, but there must be a limit to the variety. Davidson does not have any agreement with Feyerabend that different cultures and societies are different in every respect and they do not share a common way of thinking. Truth is universal, since what is true is true for all cultures and societies. If there is nothing common among cultures or societies then interaction among them is quite impossible. But that is not really the case. So there must be a shareable conceptual structure among societies or cultures. The interaction or communication is possible between two cultures if both commonly share a thought-structure, which is universal. Truth is not relative to a particular culture or society but it is the truth for all cultures and all societies.

Quine has advocated that meaning is relative to the whole language. He also says that our concept of the real is parasitic on our language. According to him, knowledge, mind and meaning can be studied only within the natural language and the natural behavior of the people. Thus Quine

arrives at relativism in meaning and ontology. His indeterminacy of translation is the direct result of his ontological relativism Davidson does not agree with Quine that meaning is relative to language. Truth, which is universal, is not relative to any particular language. So meaning which is dependent on truthconditions of sentences is also universal and can be communicated across languages. True, for Davidson, absolute indeterminance of radical translation cannot make any sense.

Davidson does not agree with Quine that the universe makes no sense without a background theory. Understanding of the universe is something objective and it does not depend upon any background theory. There is a conceptual scheme, which is common to all languages. Thus we should take language as embodying a universal conceptual scheme which facilitates inter-linguistic communication. Just as there is a universal conceptual scheme, there is one world, which all linguistic systems refer to. Thus Davidson accepts ontological absolutism. Absolutism, in the conceptual sense, may not be completely wrong. As Quine says :

> Truth, says the cultural relativist, is culture-bound. But if it were, then he, within his own culture, ought to see his own culture-bound truth as absolute. He cannot proclaim cultural relativism without rising above it, and he cannot rise above it without giving it up.[13]

According to Kuhn, scientists operating in different scientific traditions or 'paradigms' work in different worlds.[14] Science, according to him, does not progress slowly and steadily towards a single truth.[15] Kuhn says the absolutist view of scientific truth is a myth as it is based on the assumption that there is only one scientific truth possible. He therefore challenge the absolutic assumption about the way science works. Each science has its particular 'paradigm.' Science at any given point in time is dominated by a specific paradigm. Paradigm-shift is possible only when a revolution takes place in science. A new paradigm is completely independent of the preceding ones.

Kuhn's theory of how science works in a paradigm is not true. There are correlations among different sciences. If there were no correlation, then no new scientific theory can emerge out of the old ones. There must be continuity between modern science and the pre-modern or ancient science. There is therefore no incommensurability in sciences. There is a

common conceptual scheme, which is shared by all sciences. In a general sense, there are no different sciences. There is one science and the different developments take place within that science. According to Davidson, there is an all-comprehensive science that approximates to the description of one world.[16]

Davidson's idea is that conceptual relativism postulating incommensurable conceptual system betrays paradox.[17] It is true that people may live differently in different cultures and in different communities, they may also use different languages but there is a thought-structure, which is common to all languages. Within the scheme there might be developments. Which do not go beyond the scheme. Thus Davidson dissolves the so-called incommensurability of conceptual schemes.

The Possibility of intertranslatability of languages

Language is specifically a mode of interaction of at least two beings, a speaker and a hearer. It presupposes an organized group to which these people belong and from which they have acquired their habit of speech. There must be something common between speaker and hearer. They must share the same conceptual scheme so that they can communicate with each other. As Ramberg explains :

> Davidson is making a philosophically substantive point, and his target is powerful and highly plausible idea. For what could linguistic competence be, if not the mastery of a clearly defined shared structure, the mastery of an integrated, unitary system that speaker and interpreter have in common ?[18]

All human languages are intertranslatable. Two languages can be translated into each other if and only if they commonly share a thought-structure. Translation is an exercise in showing that though languages are different, there is a common meaning and thought which is shared by people speaking different languages.

Translation is a specific form of language use, when people who speak different languages want to communicate with one another. Translation is done normally with the help of a granulator, who knows both the languages. An utterance in the translated language will thus become understood by means of the utterance in the language into which translation is made. For successful translation the target language utterances must be

equivalent in meaning to the utterance in the original language. That is, there must be translation equivalence between their two languages preserving invariance in meaning and truth.

Translations are, however, dependent on the peculiarities of the languages concerned. This may lead to the possibility of indeterminacy as Quine has shown. Quine believes that indeterminacy follows all kinds of translation because the same sentence in the native language can be translated in all languages only if we accept that there is a universal thought structure common to all languages. In the absence of universal meaning and thought translation goes indeterminate.

We have already argued that to have a language is to have a conceptual scheme, but this does not entail that each language has its unique untranslatable conceptual scheme. A speaker can have many languages but yet has a single system of thought. One can go easily from one language to another without changing his thought. This provides the strongest argument in favor of the theory that there is a universal conceptual scheme, shareable by all languages.

As Davidson says, to have a language is something unique to man and we cannot think without a language. So conceptual scheme is bound to be necessarily embedded in a language. It is therefore impossible that someone can take up a vantagepoint outside language and conceptual scheme by temporarily shedding his own. It is necessary fact that we stand only within the conceptual scheme. Each conceptual scheme that we have resembles the neighboring conceptual scheme that looks apparently different. In the deep sense we all share the same conceptual scheme.

Again the question arises : do two people have different conceptual schemes if they speak languages that fail intertranslatability ? In such cases, there are only two possibilities : either translation fails completely or fails partially. Davidson gives importance to partial failure because it at least preserves conceptual shareability. Davidson says :

> ... my strategy will be to argue heat we cannot make sense of total failure, and then to examine more briefly cases of partial failure.[19]

According to Davidson, there would be complete failure :

If no significant range of sentences in one language could be translated into the other, there would be partial failure if some range could be translated and some range could not.[20]

In case of complete failure of translation, there are some words, which cannot be translated from one language to another because of the dissimilarities between two worlds of thought and life. But this is rare and never happens amongst human beings.

If we enter little deep into the problem, we can find that we can make sense only of partial failure of translation. There may be some languages, which cannot be translated into English but, can be translated into some other languages. For instance, 'Saturnian' may be translated into English and 'Plutonium' cannot be translated into English but 'Plutonian' can be translated into 'Saturnian'[21]. So, in this case there is only a partial failure so far as the translation into English is concerned.

Meaning and truth

We may now consider whether we can generate distinct conceptual schemes from within the one we actually occupy. We can evolve a new set of concepts from old scheme. How this new scheme results from old is the problem of history of science. It is a factual issue how new scientific schemes have come into existence. There is always the possibility of a new science replacing the old. But none of these entails the possibility that we have different and incommensurable conceptual schemes. There is a single scheme within which there are different developments.

Davidson holds the 'charitable' approach to the interpretation of conceptual schemes which are not our own. His theory of radical interpretation is based on the belief that the people who belong to alien cultures are also rational like us and they understand the world the way we understand it. This is called the principle of charity.[22] Thus we can translate radically different languages to our own. There is therefore not only preservation of meaning but also of truth in radical translation. Davidson's theory of interpretation presupposes a theory of truth according to which truth is a semantic property of sentences used by speakers in a spatio-temporal context. Davidson accepts Tarski-type of definition of truth.[23]

The method of radical translation is not designed to eliminate disagreement completely; its purpose is to make meaningful disagreement

possible and this depends entirely on a foundation in agreements

So the relativistic idea is an illusion. A total failure of translation would mean that there is no conceptual scheme fitting the world. This leads to the total collapse of communication and cross-cultural understanding. This abolishes the very notion of truth and meaning. The idea of relative conceptual scheme does not take account of the fact that all such conceptual schemes presuppose a background conceptual scheme that is not relative to any one language but is the absolute background of all thought and language.

Division's main goal is thus to reintroduce the metaphysical conclusion that truth is universal. He dismisses any kind of mediation between language and the world. It is a sort of picture of a state of affairs in which we re-establish touch with the world. Davidson advocates that there is a universal 'truth' which is shareable by all languages. Truth is not relative to any language. Truth is something transcendental unchanged and common to all languages. Davidson says :

> What we must attend to in language, if we want to bring into relief general features of the world, is what it is in general for a sentence in the language to be true. The suggestion is that if the truth conditions of sentences are placed in the context of a comprehensive theory, the linguistic structure that emerges will reflect large features of reality.[25]

Conclusion

Relativism has penetrated all our experiences - linguistic, cultural, moral, social and political. The varieties of relativism are already in the air leading to cynicism and nihilism. It has been argued that there are errors in our concepts of representation, truth, rationality and so on. However, we cannot avoid the primordial intuition that there is a world that is independent of our beliefs and knowledge. As R.C.Pradhan says "It is the demand that truth be preserved as a stable and strong concept in our logical thinking and that there be scope for criteria for evaluating the conflicting conceptual paradigms in all fields of our conceptual activity".[26]

We can strongly argue that Davidson has given up the traditional dualism of scheme and content and reestablished the theory that reality is not related to any scheme. The main intention of his philosophy is that how

linguistic communication/interpretation works. He says.

> We must conclude... Given the underlying methodology of interpretation, we could not be in a position to judge that others had concepts or beliefs radically different from our own.[27]

Communication cannot be possible between people if they have radically different conceptual schemes. So for communication there must be a common co-rodinate system. As I have discussed recently that :

> If we accept the relativity of language and form of life, then communication or interpretation becomes impossible. If we understand others' activity and communicate with them, then other forms of life surely belong to us.[28]

As Ramberg writes :

> ... Davidson's empirical, holistic and dynamic picture of language is intended ultimately as a semantic underpinning for a holistic understanding of critical rationality.[29]

So people may speak different languages but the scheme or ontology is common among languages. This position can be characterized as conceptual absolutism, which brings an end to the philosophical controversy over the multiplicity of conceptual schemes. Davidson is the strongest defender of absolutist theories of truth and meaning.

NOTES

1. P. Feyerabend : *Farewell to Reason,* Verso, London, 1987. p.17
2. *Ibid.,* 13
3. *Ibid.,* 13
4. D. Davidson : 'On the Very Idea of A Conceptual Scheme' in *Inquiries Into Truth and Interpretation,* Claredon press, Oxfor, 1984. p. 183
5. Davidson calls this scheme - content controversy is 'third dogma' of empiricism.
6. Richard J. Bernstein : *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism : Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis,* Basil Blackwel, Oxford, 1983.p.3
7. Richard Rorty : *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1979.p.3
8. See Bernstein's *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism : Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis,* p.4.

9. In the *Theaetetus,* Protagoras is portrayed as holding that "man is the measure of all things" and that any given thing "is to me such as it appears to me, and is to you such as it appears to you."

10. See Davidson's, 'On the Very Idea of A Conceptual Scheme' in *Inquiries Into Truth and Interpretaion,* p. 183.

11. P. Feyerabend : *Farewell To Reason,* Verso, London, 1987. p. 19.

12. *Ibid.,* p. 1.

13. W.V.Quine : 'On Empirically Equivalent Systems of the World', Ertenntnis 9, 1975. pp. 327-8

14. T. S. Kuhn : The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, The University of Chicago Press, Chicag, 1970.

15. *Ibid.*

16. See Davidson's Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation, p. 187.

17. *Ibid.,* p. 184.

18. B. T. Ramberg : Donald Davidson's Philosophy of Language : An Introduction, Basil Blackwell, New York, 1989. pp. 1-2.

19. See Davidosn's Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation, p. 185.

20. *Ibid.,* p. 185.

21. *Ibid.,* p. 186.

22. *Ibid.,* p. 126-139.

23. *Ibid.,* p. 17-36.

24. *Ibid.,* p. 196-197.

25. *Ibid.,* p. 201.

26. R. C. Pradhan: 'On the Very Idea of Relative Truth', *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research,* Volume XVII Number 2, Janury- April 2000. p.59.

27. See Davidson's *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation,* p. 197.

28. Ramakanta Bal: "Wittgenstenin on Relativism", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* XXVII No. 4 October 2001. p. 505.

29. See Ramberg's *Donald Davidson's Philosophy of Language : An Introduction,* p.3.

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ONTOLOGY, VALUES AND ETHICAL CONSTRAINTS : EARLY PHENOMENOLOGISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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It was with the Enlightenment a view of the world came to the fore that was in most aspects antithetical to the onto-theological philosophy[1]. The Enlightenment presented a conception of the world and everything in it as consisting of merely physical phenomena completely determined by blind causal laws. This conception of the mechanical world excluded the notion of spirit, free will, meaning, sense, value and concomitant notions such as merit, guilt, and responsibility. Human action became human behavior and man was conceived of as a material organism, driven forward by causal forces, which govern him like sovereign masters. In this conception of the world there was no room for the "ought-to-be". The world simply was what it is, and man acts just mechanically. Morality, in the traditional sense, was altogether expelled from the order of being. And yet, when we shift from a theoretical to a practical point of view, we inhabit a world that is permeated with spirit, free will, meaning, sense, value and the imputation of merit, guilt, responsibility and so on. A world, in short, that is saturated with morality and finality. The question of how to make sense of this paradox is a central issue in Post-Enlightenment Philosophy.

Here, it is important to note that from Descartes and Hobbes to Hume, to Kant, to Nietzsche, to Heidegger and Wittgenstein, to Dewey and Derrida, the history of modern philosophy is a continuous and radicalizing effort to destruct the onto-theological philosophy and an affirmation of Greek sophism[2]. Then, where does this leave that philosophy ? Does that philosophy persist ? It is not easy to get a straightfoward answer to these questions. However, the onto-theological philosophy has had and still has

its defenders in the modern world, from Pufendorf, the later Leibnitz, and the Cambridge Platonists to today's Thomists, such as Josef Pieper and John Finnis. In this paper an attempt is made to defend the onto-theological philosophy not exactly as in Plato, rather, as in the philosophy of the early realist phenomenologists who were listeners to Husserl at the time he was teaching in Gottingen. Among them the most influential names are Max Scheler, Nicolai Hartmann and Dietrich Von Hilderbrand. Their approach to ontology and ethics puts effective and persistent defense of the Platonic heritage according to their own approach to man, life and the world that we experience at all. My attempt shall be ultimately concerned with the ethical views of the early realist phenomenoloigists, which in essence constitute a vindication of the moral order. As these ethical views are comprehensible only in the context of their ontological ideas, let us begin with these ideas.

1. Husserl's Psychologism' as the Foundational Feedback

Edmund Husserl's two volumes of his *Logical Investigations*[3] came to sunlight during 1900-1901. In these works he attacks a view of logic that he calls "Psychologism". Obviously, the concept of logic here stands for the science of thought in general, not merely for symbolic logic. Then what is the meaning of 'Psychologism'? This concept stands for two trends of philosophical investigation : first, for the empiricist trend deriving from Locke and Hume, and second, for Kantian transcendentalism[4]. According to the empiricist trend of thought logic consists of inductive generalizations from sense-experience and, according to Kantian transecendentalism, logic as a pattern of human consciousness imposes upon the empirical world. Husserl argues that, notwithstanding the fundamental differences between these two trends of thought, they are in one important respect very similar. For both consider logic as structured by human consciousness i.e. the human psyche, and thus psychologism. Husserl rejects both views. He claims against the Kantians that the laws of logic are "out there", a pattern *in* or *of* the world, not merely one we impose *upon* it, and against the empiricists that the laws of logic constitute an ideal and aprioristic order of being, not merely a short-hand-way of summarizing in *abstracto* concrete experiences. Husserl makes out psychologism as in the sense that :

'Psychologism in all its subvarieties and individual elaborations is in fact the same as relativism.. It makes no difference whether, as a

formal idealism, based on a 'transcendental psychology, it seeks to save the objectivity of knowledge, or whether leaning on empirical psychology it accepts relativism as its ineluctable fate. Every doctrine is *ipso facto* relativistic, a case of specific relativism, if, with the empiricists, it treats the pure laws of logic as empirical, psychological laws. It is likewise relativistic, if with the apriorists, it deduces these laws, in more or less mythic fashion, from certain 'original forms' or 'modes of functioning' of the human understanding, from consciousness as such, conceived as generic (human) reason, from the psycho-phsical constitution of man, from the *intellectus ipse* which, as an innate (generically human) disposition, precedes all actual thought and experience"[5].

With this remark, as it is mostly suggestive one, it may be asked : what is this "specific relativism"? Husserl writes :

"Specific relativism makes the assertion : Anything is true for a given species of judging being that, by their constitution and laws of thought, must count as true"[6].

Husserl, however, rejects this view in claiming so far as :

"This doctrine is absurd. For it is part of its sense that the same proposition or content of judgment can be true for a subject of the species *homo,* but may be false for another subject or a differently constituted species. The same content of judgment cannot, however, be both true and false : this follows from the mere sense of 'true' and 'false'... What is true is absolutely, intrinsically true : truth is one and the same, whether men or non-men, angels or gods apprehend and judge it. Logical laws speak of truth in this ideal unity, set over against the real multiplicity of races, individuals and experiences, and it is of this ideal unity that we speak when we are not confused by relativism"[7].

Again, the problem occurs regarding the knowledge of these objective truths. Husserl simply suggests that the knowledge of these objective truths is acquired by phenomenological analysis[8]. But what does that mean ? In his *System of Logic*[9]. J.S.Mill, one of the psychologists whom Husserl's criticism was aimed at had argued that

"[t]ruths are known to us in two ways : some are known directly, and of themselves; some through the medium of other truths. The former are the subject of intuition, or consciousness; the latter, of

inference. The truths known by intuition are the original premises
from which all others are inferred.. Whatever is known to us by
consciousness is known beyond possibility of question. What one
sees or feels, whether bodily or mentally, one can not but be sure
that one sees or feels"[10].

Here, the dichotomy between knowledge through intuition and knowledge
through inference is, of course, of ancient pedigree as referring to Aristotle,
and Husserl has no claim with it. It is only on the question what one can
see or feel, i.e. what truths are known by intuition, that Husserl differs
with the views expressed by empiricists like Mill, as well as with those
expressed by the Kantians.

According to Mill and the other empiricists, the laws of logic are
inferred from concrete sense-experience. The principle of non-contradiction,
for instance, Mill considers "to be, like other axioms, one of our first and
most familiar generalizations from experience"[11]. They are the results of
inductive inference and are not known directly by intuition. For the Kantians,
too, the laws of logic are inferences, although deductive rather than inductive
in nature. Since they are implicit in our conceptions, they can be inferred
from these conceptions by arguing "backwards" towards their necessary
presuppositions. Hence, notwithstanding the fundamental differences
between their views, both the empiricists and the Kantians regard logic as
something not known directly i.e. by intuition.

In the *Logical Investigations,* Husserl argues that both views are
mistaken. The laws of logic, indeed, belong to the things that are directly
apperceived. They are as in Mill's words, "known beyond possibility of
question" or as Husserl likes to put it, "apodictically true". They belong to
the synthetic *apriori* so far they are experientially given, but not
'transcendental' as Knat likes to put. Of course, one may further be tempted
to ask the question: What kind of apperception, of experience, is this ?
According to Husserl this kind of apperception or experience is called
"categorical intuition" as opposed to "sensuous intuition"[12]. In later works
he affirms 'a completely new science which is called 'eidetic psychology'
first and 'phenomenological psychology' 'afterwords[13]'. Husserl's concept
of 'eidetic psychology' tells about the nature of 'eidetic intuition' which
refers to the apperception of the essential structure - "das wesen" of objects.
It is not from our sense-experience that we know of/infer the laws of

logic, but from the eidetically perceived eidos of these laws. This conception is explicitly discussed in his *Phenomenological psychology* (1925). Prof. S.K.Pas writes,

"In the Introduction to this book he characterizes the new psychology as a *Prioric,* eidetic, intuitive, or a pure descriptiove and intentional study of psychical facts. The epithet 'a prioric' implies that 'this psychology aims first of all at all those essential universalities and necessities, without which psychological being and living are simply inconceivable'. The title 'intuitive' stands for the source of this *apriori.* The term 'intentional' implies the most universal characteristic of psychic being and living : Psychic life is the life of consciousness, and this consciousness is consciousness of something"[14].

Especially, ideas expounded in the *Logical Investigations* quickly attracted the attention of some serious scholars and academics, and in the course of the following decade, a phenomenological 'movement' was developed as the result of their attraction mainly at Gottingen where Husserl was teaching , and in Munich. At the centre of this movement were Max Scheler (1874-1928), Adolf Reinach (1883-1917), Alexander Pfander. (1870-1941), Dietrich Von Hildebrand (1889-1977), Edith Stein (1891-1942), Hedwig Conrad-Martius (1888-1966), and Roman Ingarden (1893-1970). Besides these. Nicolai Hortmann (1882-1950) ought to be mentioned. Though Husserl had kept his distance, both spatially and intellectually, his thought was deeply influenced by these phenomenologists[15]. Later, of course, after Husserl had moved to Freiburg, others came to the fore, most prominently Martin Heidegger. And later still, phenomenology was exported to France where it shaped the thought of Sartre, Merleau-ponty, and other philosophical luminaries. I am not interested to deal with these chapters in the history of phenomenology here, rather, suffice it to say that in the hands of these thinkers phenomenology turned into something fundamental and fruitful[16].

What appealed to the early phenomenologists in the *Logical Investigations* was not so much the subject of Husserl's text, the ontological foundation of logic but the general implications of Husserl's approach to this issue. They saw the *Logical Investigations* as a rejection of the subjectivism and relativism characteristic of modern philosophy, and "a return to the great ontological ideas of antiquity"[17]. In their view *Logical*

Investigations resuscitated two fundamental view points : (i) the significance of the object as opposed to the subject, of the known as opposed to the knower, of ontology as opposed to epistemology, and (ii) of universals as opposed to particulars, of the eidetic *mundus intellegibilis* as opposed to the factual world of sense perception, of understanding as opposed to explanation.

Scheler and Reinach were the most influential and recognised thinkers within the group of early phenomenologists. their influence on the other phenomenologists eclipsed that of Husserl himself owing to the fact that Husserl's views had partially changed since writing the *Logical Investigations*. As his students had anticipated and was confirmed by the publication in 1913, of the first part of the *Ideas, General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, Husserl had gradually returned to a form of transcendental idealism which his followers thought had been overcome in the *Logical Investigations*.

2. Phenomenology vs. Transcendental Idealism

For Husserl phenomenology was the analysis of the essence of consciousness. And it is significant to state Husserl, as it seems, was greatly invoked by the thoughts of Descrates and Kant as the two greatest fore runners of phenomenology[18]. Before, he had argued that the phenomenologist is not interested in the consciousness to which things appear, but only in the appearances themselves. to this concern he had spoken of the need 'to exclude the ego' in order to perceive accurately. But being committed to the phenomenology he maintained that this exclusion distorts the analysis of the appearances because the appearances are constituted by the transcendental ego. Most of Husserl's early followers in Gottingen, rejected this transcendental turn : To them, phenomenology was and remained a realist philosophy. Dietrich Von Hildebrand writes,

> "Transcendental idealism interprets taking cognizance of something as a construction of the object and thereby denies that we are able to grasp a real object such as it is. Yet it claims that philosophy describes the real nature of knowledge. It is perfectly clear that transcendental idealism does not consider its own interpretation of knowledge as a mere construction and that it claims it to be the disclosure of the authentic nature of knowledge. With this claim it tacitly presupposes and silently reintroduces the real nature and

true notion of taking cognizance, namely, the grasping of an object such as it is. And not the construction of an object. This intrinsic contradiction in transcendental idealism is, however, inevitable. For the genuine datum of knowledge and taking cognizance of something is so elementary that every attempt to deny it or to interpret it as something else necessarily leads to a vicious circle"[19].

Hildebrand argues that an act of cognizance, in fact, is "that unique spiritual contact with being whereby the being in its own nature reveals itself to us,.. a transcendent contact with being, which represents neither a real participation in the being of the known object nor any kind of production or creating"[20]. Again, Hildebrand adds, "This transcendent spiritual contact represents an intentional participation in a being"[21]. For Husserl, after his transcendental turn, the apriori world of the eide was a "necessity of thinking" but for his followers it remained a "necessity of being". Reinach, for example, in his essay *What is Phenomenology* ", defined the *apriori* as "not a necessity of thinking, but a necessity of being ... The *apriori* as such has nothing to do with thinking and taking cognizance"[22].

It is obvious that this view indicates a return to a fundamental notion of ancient and medieval philosophy. Thus it is not surprising that the phenomenologists returned to a study of ancient and medieval philosophy with great eagerness, motivated by a sense of its utmost pertinence. It is worthwhile to note that if Husserl and his followers go separate ways with regard to the question of the ontological status of the *apriori,* they never disagree as to the method of discovering the *apriori.* All agree with that eidetic intuition is the doorway to the *apriori.* What exactly is this eidetic intuition ? To begin with the concept of intuition as used by the phenomenologists is not an irrational or mystical form of cognizance, but simply a rendering of the Latin *intuitus,* the perfect participle of the verb *intueri,* which means to consider, to look at, to gaze upon, to behold. Hence, intuition is more or less synonymous with perception or observation[23]. Observation, however, is inadequately understood, at least in modern philosophy. It is more than just the observation of empirical facts, more than just "sensuous intuition", to which it is generally limited. Man is also capable of perceiving the world of empirical facts. This type of perception or observation is identical to grasping, to comprehending the nature of something, seeing it with the mind's eye, as it were.

In the *Ideas,* Husserl explains the matter as follows :

"An individual object is not simply and quite generally an individual, a 'this there' something unique; but being constituted thus and thus 'in itself' it has its own proper mode of being, its own supply of essential predicable which must qualify it (qua 'Being as it is in itself'), if other secondary relative determinations are to qualify it also. Thus, for example, every tone in and for itself has an essential nature, and at the limit the universal essence 'tone in general', or rather the acoustic in general - understood in the pure sense of a phrase or aspect intuitively drivable form the individual tone (either in its singleness, or through comparison with others as a 'common element"[24].

Further he adds, "Just as the datum of individual or empirical intuition is an individual object, so the datum of essential intuition is pure essence"[25].

Husserl's argument may be said to bring out the major consequence: whereas empirical intuition focuses on "Dasein", on what something in *him et nunc,* essential intuition focuses of "Sosein", on *what* something is in essence. A focus on "Dasein" invokes questions related to existence and non-existence to coming into being and passing away, in terse, on understanding change. A focus on "Sosein", on the other hand, abstract from existence, Husserl's eidetic reduction[26], and concentrates on identity and difference. It is not relavant how something came about or what it brings about, but merely what is essentially is, what its eidos is, and in what way it is related to or posited vis-a-vis other eide in the order of being i.e. its essential relations.

3. Phenomenological Domination and the Continuum of Values

Logic as discussed so far is a paradigmatic instance of an essential structure. Other cases often referred to by the phenomenologists are the total gamut and the chromatic spectrum. The world is permeated by eide and eidetic structures such as these. In reality, this constitutes what is called phenomenological domination. The spirit of this domination, as Prof. R. Sundar Rajan rightly points out, is governed by the primary rule of the phenomenologists 'back to the things themselves'[27]. Among these essences and essential structures, the early phenomenologists see one which seems to be a particular splendor; the continuum of values. Contrary to Husserl who is not particularly interested in these matters, of his followers were

strongly drawn towards questions of value, particularly questions of ethical value. Applying Husserl's "Wesensschau" to this matter they began to study ethics with a phenomenological vision. This quickly proved to be a tremendously fruitful approach yielding insights of great depth and significance.

With due regards to phenomenological domination Max Scheler, indeed, pointed out the way with his *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value.* His insights were further developed and systematized by several brilliant disciples, above all by Nicolai Hartmann in his *Ethics* published in 1926 and by Dietrich Von Hildebrand in his *Christian Ethics.* Although there are important differences between these writers, their intentions and basic approaches are very similar. In the first place, all three thinkers maintain that the ontological status of ethics is comparable to the ontological status of logic as set out by Husserl in the *Logical Investigations.* Hence, they follow Kant in his rejection of an empiricist (utiilitarian, a posteriori) foundation of ethics. But at the same time they are equally inimical of Kant's own transcendental approach which posits the principles of ethics as intrinsic to our thinking as rational and free agents. Scheler, Hartmann and Hildebrand argue that the principles of ethics cannot be reduced to the subject, whether empirical or transcendental, but, instead, constitute an *Objective eidetical sphere,* an *apriori* moral order, within the order of being. They accept Kant's argument that demands ("Imperatives") which can be reduced to a utilitarian calculus, are at best "counsels of prudence", but not ethical demands. Only if a demand / imperative is an ultimate end, "a purpose in itself", does it deserve to be called ethical. An ethical demand is ethical, independent of its consequences. It is a good in itself or it is not an ethical demand at all. Hence, ethical demands are not subordinate to our aims, but superior to them. They sit in judgment on our aims.

However, this important insight was, according to the phenomenologists, marred by Kant's belief that since ethical demands are superior to our aims and our aims are part of the empirical world, ethical demands must be normative concepts which our practical reason imposes upon the world. "Kant was not in a position to picture to himself an *apriori* which did not subsist in a function of the subject", says Hartmann[28]. In fact, in the phenomenologists view that is a fundamental mistake. As

Hartmann writes,

> "May not the content of what the subject discerns apriori be just as
> objective as what he perceives a posteriori ? That the aprioristic
> contents are not to be extracted from the real ('empirical') objects as
> such does not in any way derogate form their objectivity. Geometric
> relations cannot indeed be derived from things, not even from drawn
> figures, but are at best illustrated by these; they are nonetheless on
> that account something purely objective, something that can be
> discerned as objects, and they have nothing to do with the functions
> of consciousness. The relation of cause and effect is never
> perceptible to sense, not even when the two members of the
> perception are given; but it is nevertheless an objective relationship,
> and only as such is it attached to what is perceived. No inference is
> permissible that it is a relation which holds between functions of
> consciousness"[29].

In fact, Scheler, Hartmann and Hildebrand argue that ethical
demands, or the values which lie behind these demands, are the objects of
a specific type of perception, namely, eidetic perception.

Consequently, values are at centre of our consciousness. With
cognition and volition valuation is at the core of conscious life. In fact,
valuation precedes volition, volition presupposes valuation. Moreover,
valuation also precedes cognition. "Each primary attitude toward the world,
vis-a-vis not only the outer but also the inner world, vis-a-vis not only
others but also our own ego, is pertinently not representation, an attitude of
perception, but always at the same time.. primarily a ... value-taking
attitude", says Scheler[30]. The term "value-taking" as used by Scheler
suggests that in valuing, values are not posited by us, but given[31]. Values
are objective, not subjective and relative. However, there are some
exceptions. Some values are posited, in some cases man is indeed the
measure of things. To understand in which cases we need a typology of
values. A typology of values suggests that values are not all of the same
type.

Scheler identifies different "value-modalities"[32]. First of all, the
Kosmos noetos of values comprises the value of pleasant. The value of
the useful belongs to this modality as well, which is never an ultimate value
but is derived from the pleasant. A second modality comprises the values

of life such as vitality, vigor, energy, health, strength, ability, etc. It includes "all such equalitis that are encompassed by the contradistinctions of 'the nobel' and 'the common' i.e. by 'the good' in the pregnant sense of 'excellent', as opposed not to 'evil' but to 'bad'.[33]" A third modality comprises all the spiritual values as subdivided by Scheler into four different categories : aesthetic values, intellectual values (those pertaining to finding the truth), ethical values and religious values. Here, it is to state that the typologies of values given by Hartmann and Hildebrand are somewhat different. Hildebrand distinguishes between "the subjectively satisfying", "the objectively good for a person" and "values", which correspond approximately to respectively Scheler's first, second and third modality"[34]. Hartmann includes Scheler's second modality, the 'Nietzschean" life values, in the ethical values. He excludes values of religion, although he incorporates values often regarded as religious, such as "richness of experience" and "purity" in the ethical sphere[35].

So far as Scheler's typlogy of values is concerned the values of the first modality regarding the pleasant and the useful is completely subjective and relative. Valuable is here what appears valuable to the individual. On this ground, Hildebrand argues that the pleasant and the useful should not be called values at all. In contradistinction, the remaining modalities contain absolute and objective values that are truly given and demand to be recoginsed. These values do not follow us, rather we are obliged to follow them. Scheler, Hartmann and Hildebrand all insist that there is an objective ranking between and within the various value-modalities determined by the height and the strength of a value. In terms of height, the values of life rank lower in the nature of things than the spiritual values. Within the modality of spiritual values, the ethical values presumably rank lowest, the intellectual values higher, the aesthetic higher still, and the religious rank highest at least in Scheler's account. Hildebrand has a similar view and Hartmann would obviously deny the place of houor to the religious values, and would probably class them among the ethical values. In terms of strength, on the other hand, the ranking between the various value-modalities and values is exactly the opposite. The values of life are more forceful than the spiritual values. Within the modality of the spiritual values the ethical values are the most forceful, etc.

As important as it is evident that the higher the level of a value, the

more valuable it is but the less strength it has. The stronger values are in a sense primary, but the higher values reach out further into the transcendent and grant a fuller participation in Being. What precisely does this mean? Within the modality of ethical value, for example, this means, in Hartmann's words, that:

> "to sin against a lower value is in general more grievous than to sin against a higher; but the fulfillment of a higher is morally more valuable than that of a lower. Murder is held to be the most grievous crime, but respect for another's life is not on that account the highest moral state-not to be compared with friendship, love, trustworthiness.... A sin against the lower values is blameworthy, is dishonorable, excites indignation, but their fulfillment reaches only the level of property, without rising higher. The violation, on the other hand, of the higher values has indeed the character of a moral defect, but has nothing degrading in it, while the realization of these values can have something exalting in it, something liberating, indeed inspiring."[36].

Following the phenomenologists whose efforts are principally directed at the investigation of ethical values, we may leave aside further discussion of the life-values, the aeschertic values, the intellectual values and the religious values, and focus on "the realm of ethical values" as Hartmann calls it [37]. Hartmann justifies this limitation with the argument that "our knowledge of the structure and order of values is in a rudimentary stage. We can look out upon the whole realm only through special groups of values which happen to be accessible, but we can not deductively determine particulars from a general view of the whole... (T)he domain of ethical values, as yet the most accessible among the more important fields, must itself furnish as with points of departure into a general theory of value"[38].

4. Ethical Values, Person and Virtues

The *differentia specifica* of ethical values is that they pertain to what the phenomenologists call "persons". Only persons can be "carriers" of ethical values. At the core of his notion of the person are ideas like responsibility, free will, and intentionality. Hence, not all human beings are persons. Children, for example, are not persons in the full sense of the word until they have come of maturity. They cannot be held fully responsible for their conduct, and are thus not or only in part, 'carriers' of ethical

values. Only a subject that possesses personhood can be meaningfully judged on the basis of an ethical standard[39]. Persons "carry" or fail to "carry" ethical values in three different ways : (1) in their actions, (2) in their affections and (3) in their dispositions. These are the three realms in which ethical value can manifest itself. There is no need to elaborate on action as a realm of ethical value. Acts are the most visible of value-manifestation. Not surprisingly, therefore, modern moral philosophy, the Kantian no less than the empiricist tradition, is predominantly concerned with actions. That is unobjectionable as long as it is recognsied that ethical value is pertinent to other spheres as well, more particularly to affections and to dispositions. But that recognition is often lacking, the result of which is a moral shortsightedness, which fails to notice a substantial and significant segment of the moral order.

Serious discussions on the realm of ethical values reveals the general fact that the realm of affections, emotions or feelings is mostly neglected. The fact that emotivism which derives ethical values from affections, does not contradict this statement. However, what we are concerned with here is the manifestations of ethical values in affections, not the manifestation of affections in ethical values. It is a clear fact that emotivism *eo ipso* incapable of considering the former question in any other way than considering it absurd. Of course, the complexity and depth of the cosmos of affections is immeasurable. For example, joy, love, trust, compassion, pride, satisfaction, disgust, hate, envy, contempt, anger, dislike, lust, admiration and so on are all specimens of affections, each in itself multifarious and intricately related to numerous other affections. All of these are essentially "responses." Incontestably, in all of these cases the affection in question has an ethical quality. Moreover, appropriate responses respond to an objective ethical value and are themselves ethically valuable, whereas inappropriate responses respond to a subjective desire and are merely subjectively valuable. Appropriate responses are demanded from us by the moral law, inappropriatre responses constitute a transgression of the moral law.

The third possible "carrier" of ethical value is the person himself. This is the real, not of acts, or of affections, but of the permanent qualities of character of disposition. "This is the actual marrow of morality", says Hildebrand, as acts and affections are rooted in the moral quality of a

person. Hildebrand distinguishes between three 'moral centres' within the person. "These centres are present in each human being, in most all three some control, in some, one of them dominates entirely"[40]. Two of these centres are directed toward subjective desires, all of which can be reduced to either concupiscence or isolence. The third centre within us is directed toward 'the realm of moral values." When this third centre is predominant in a person, he is virtuous i.e. he has a virtuous disposition. Thus a virtue is disposition to respond adequately / appropriately to an ethical value that is demanded from us by the order of being, whether through an action or through an affection. The notion of virture is central to the moral philosophy of Scheler, Hartmann and Hildebrand. Since my purpose is confined to set out the general idea behind their phenomenological approach to the subject of ethical , it is not an imperative job to set out in details how Scheler, Hartmann and Hildebrand discuss their respective views on virtue.

To conclude, it can be said that onto-theological philosophy in a phenomenological framework has not lost its legacy and force. In fact, Husserl provides sufficient space and clues to his followers : those who are significantly recognized as early phenomenologists, for developing their ideas on the reality, values and approach to ethics. Though they reject many ideas of Husserl, they are committed to Husserlian phenomenological psychologism in certain extent, especially the postulate as regards 'eidetic intuition'. With this presumption the early phenomenologists claim that Husserl's ontological status of logic ensures better understanding of the ontological status of ethic. Values, virtues, etc., preserve its objectivity in a order of being. This is possible and persistent because the human consciousness is situated in the order of being rather than derived from the so-called theory of subjectivism or relativism.

NOTES

1. Onto-theological philosophy is represented by the tradition in philosophy in which Plato is recognosced as the founder. Plato's philosophy, by refuting and overcoming the sophistic relativisms as developed by early Greek thinkers e.g. Protagoras, Callicles, Thrasymachus, etc., commits to what is often called a two-world theory : the distinction between the world of appearances and the world of being (Theatetus, 152a). According to Plato the true and the good might appeal multiple and relative to you and me, but

behind this appearance lies hidden the one True and the one Good. Man might in a sense be the ground of the appearances, but something else, something absolute, is the ground of being : God. Plato insists that God, not man, is the measure of all things (*Nomoi.*716 c). The Platonic theory of Forms or Ideas is the backbone of this tradition. For Plato, since in the world of particulars, of the phenomena everything is in flux, behind this apparently true world there is another world, an underlying reality, without motion and change, in which all particulars participate and which gives them a firm identity, an 'essence'. And essentiality is intimately connected to finality. The essence of phenomenon not only finds out what it is, but also what it ought to be. In other words, the ought to be is part and parcel of what something essentially is. Thus, not only what things are, but also what they should, is ontologically given. There is no room for human inventions and constructions, there is no place for subjectivism and relativism.

Even though this Platonic conception of the world was never entirely uncontested, it was unquestionably the dominant approach in the ancient world and during the Middle ages. As of the fourteenth century, however, the onto-theological tradition has increasingly come under attack, culminating in the nineteenth and twentieth century, in Greek Sophists. The attack was initiated by the nominalist rejection of universals, and hence of Platonic Forms, as *Flatus Vocis,* wind of voice. At the time, this rejection was motivated by the wish to do justice to God's omnipotence (Against Plato, *Euthyphro,* loaf, where it is famously argued that the holy is holy not because God wills it, but God wills it because it is holy). However, nominalism became a vindication of the views, universals and hence Platonic Forms are not an ontologically independent part of the world, but exist only in the human mind.

2.   It is, of course, to remind ourselves that Plato did not use the notion of value in a philosophical sense. Nevertheles, the concept of value - relativism gives a better idea of the views of Callicles and Thrasymachus than that of moral relativism, since the Greeks did not make as redical a distinction between moral and extra-moral goodness, as has become common in Post-Kantian Philosophy. Value, which is also broader than moral value, more or less seems to cover what they meant when they spoke of goodness.

3.   Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations,* Vol. I & Ii (London and Henley

Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.)

4.   Husserl, *Logical Investigations,* Vol. I, Sect. 28.

5.   *Ibid.,* Sect. 38.

6.   *Ibid.,* Sect. 36.

7.   *Ibid.,*

8.   *Ibid.,* Introduction, Sect. 2.

9.   J.S.Mill, *System of Logic,* 8th edition (New York : Harper & Brothers, 1874)

10.   *Ibid.,* Introduction.

11.   J.S.Mill, *Logic,* II, vii, Sect. 5.

12.   Husserl, *Logical Investigations,* Vol. II, Sect. 40ff.

13.   S.K.Pal, "Phenomenology as the foundation for Psychology : A Critique"
        in *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research,* Vol. VIII, No.,2,
        (1991), p.50

14.   *Ibid.,* pp. 50-51.

15.   H. Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* (The Hague : Martinus
        Nijhoff, 1960); Vol. I, 367ff.

16.   Dermont Morgan *Introduction to Phenomenology,* (New York : Routledge
        and Kegan Paul, 2000), who discusses Breatano, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadmar,
        Arendt, Levinas, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Darrida. And also see R.
        Sundarar Rajan, *Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Deconstruction,* (New
        Delhi : ICPR Publication, 1991).

17.   Detrich von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy ?* (Stuttgart : W. Kohlhammer,
        1976), who remarks : "The historical impact of this work of Husserl, attracting
        students of all countries to Gottingen was due to its unambiguous refutation
        of Psychological subjectivism, and all types of relativism" (p.23).

18.   Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement,* Vol. I, p. 120.

19.   Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy,* P. 16.

20.   *Ibid.,* p. 22.

21.   *Ibid.,* p. 25.

22.   Adolf Rainach, *What is Phenomenology ?* (Munchen : Kosel-Verlag, 1951),
        pp.56-57.

23.   Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy ",* 214ff

24. Husserl, *Ideas : General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology,* (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1976), Sect. 2.

25. *Ibid.,* Sect. 3.

26. The term "Phenomenological Reduction" is introduced by Husserl in the *Ideas* and covers two different reductions : a reduction from particulars to essences i.e. the eidetic reduction, and also a "transcendental reduction" which is concerned with the suspension of our belief in an independent reality. It was this second reduction which is rejected by Husserl's followers. See Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement,* Vol.I, 133ff.

27. Prof. R. Sundara Rajan, "Structuralism and Post-structuralism" in *Phenomenology Hermeneutics and Deconstruction,* p. 335.

28. N. Hartmann, *Ethics,* 3 Vols, (New York : MacMillan Company, 1932), Vol.I, p.162.

29. *Ibid.,* p. 163.

30. M.Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values,* (Evanston : North Western University Press, 1973), p. 197.

31. *Ibid.,* p. 73.

32. *Ibid.,* p. 140ff.

33. *Ibid.,* p. 106.

34. Hildebrand, *Ethics.* 39ff.

35. Hartmann, *Ethics.* Vol.Ii, 125ff.

36. *Ibid.,* p. 53.

37. *Ibid.,* p. 21.

38. *Ibid.,* p. 23.

39. Scheler, *Formalism,* 476ff.

40. Hildebrand, *Ethics.* 425ff.

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UNDERSTANDING POSTMODERNISM

JAYANTI PRIYADASHINI SAHOO

This paper is an attempt to understand "what postmodernism is" and in what way it is related with modernism. It also tries to analyze postmodernisms' view regarding the 'subject matter of philosophy' Postmodernism is a complicated term, or set of ideas, that emerged as an area of academic study since the mid-1960s. Soon it has become a hot debatable subject in the intellectual sphere. The main issues upon which the postmodern debate is going on can be stated as follows :

What is postmodernism ? Can postmodernism be defined ? Is God dead ? Has philosophy come to an end ? Is science purely objective ? Can meaningful claims to truth still be made ? What is the relationship between subjectivity, sexuality, discipline and power ? Is there a possibility of ethics in the "postmodern" condition ? Is postmodernism a continuation of modernism ?

The aim of this paper is to understand the significance and the origin of some of these question. Postmodernism is not a given or static thing that can be defined. Postmodernism may be different tomorrow that it is today - it is in the process of becoming. Once you define it, then you kill its dynamism to change. It would become fixed in time and knowledge. For example, you can't define a butterfly as a caterpillar with wings - a caterpillar becomes a butterfly through metamorphosis. A process of change takes place and the thing is no longer the thing that it was.

Probably this could be the reason behind postmodernity staying away from all definitions and objectifications and criticizing any attempt to capture the truth in propositions. Postmodernity is not a school of thought, which is goal-directed or rule-governed. In this context Bishop Gregorios writes,

"(Postmodernity) is a 'movement', it is an 'attitude' or a 'mood', but not a systematic thing where you can develop concepts and relationships, precisely what the postmodernists are against. Any attempt to oversystematize thought by being reduced to any kind of system is to reduce thinking as such. So postmodernism in basically a 'mood'".[1] Hence, Postmodernism can best be understood as a movement, which can be found in a vast field, ranging from philosophy, art, and architecture to literature, dance, drama and film, etc.

Some of the general features of postmodernism make it methodologically different from modernism. We find dualism essentially present in most of the modernist schools of thought either explicitly or implicitly. Postmodernists, particularly Derrida criticize the dualistic assumption of modern philosophical thought. For them, the reality follows diverse models, which are mutually exclusive and are rich in conflicts.

Modernists view history as a process of continuous development and objective. But for postmodernist, history is ruptured, circular and there is a subjective element involved in it. But in spite of these differences it would be erroneous to conclude that postmodernism begins where modernism ends. In this context Hugh J. Silverman observes,

"Postmodernism has no special place of origin. The meeting and function of postmodernism is to operate at places of closure, at the limits of modernists' productions and practices, at the margins of what proclaims itself to be new and a break with tradition, and at the multiple edges of these claims to self consciousness and auto reflection. Post-modernism does not open up a new field of artistic, philosophical, cultural, or even institutional activities. Its very significance is to marginalize, delimit, disseminate, and decentre the primary and often secondary works of modernist.. inscriptions."[2]

Hence, the demarcation line between modernism and postmodernism always remains a matter of uncertainty, and is never well defined. Postmodernity is not a denial of modernism. Rather it is a reconstruction, reinterpretation, and an attempt to give a new meaning to modernism. Jean Francois Lyotard is the most explicit exponent of postmodernism. His *Postmodern Condition : A Report on Knowledge* represents the core of postmodern thinking.

Whereas postmodernity is a movement, postmodernism is a

philosophical school among many other schools which come under postmodernity. Poststructuralism basically started in France and can be traced to the structuralism of Lacan, Levi-Strauss and Saussure. Poststructuralism also emerged from the philosophies of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Jacques Derrida is the chief exponent of postmodernism and being a poststructuralist he is also a postmodernist.

The description about 'postmodernism' preserves within it the close relation to structuralism on which Derrida in particular and all the poststructuralists in general depend upon. Poststructuralism is not 'post' in the sense of having killed structuralism off, it is 'post' only in the sense of coming after and of seeking to extend structuralism in its rightful direction.[3] This can be true about in the context of modernism and postmodernism also. Postmodernism is a critique of modernism in the sense that it tries to find out certain fundamental inconsistencies in its method, which the modernists have ignored.

The issue regarding the continuity of modernity and postmodernity is a hot controversial and debatable topic. There are two camps thoroughly opposed to each other in propagating the exact relationship between the two. The two views though conflicting yet sufficiently analyze the question whether postmodernity is a continuity of modernity or not. These are Jurgen Habermas's view that 'postmodernity begins where modernity ends', and Jean Francois Lyotard's standpoint that 'postmodernism is a continuation of modernism'.

First we will take into account Habermans', view with regard to this issue. Postmodernism, as Habermas argues ".. a farewell to modernity and its discourse as a whole, is in pursuit of an anarchism ... a specialized knowledge and is beyond discursive thinking and critical authority, which culminate in the business of Deconstruction".[4] Habermas sees postmodernism as a mode of thinking, which is disconnected from the series of scientific analysis. Hence, for Habermas, "This (Postmodern) mode of thinking can only result in an empty and formalistic incantation of an undermined authority".[5]

Habermas denounces postmodernism as not only prominently based on pragmatic inconsistency, but it even did not bring a distinction between literature and philosophy. Derrida himself admits, as observed by Habermas, that philosophical discourse has lost its prominence by turning its course

from pragmatic way of solving problems to fiction and rhetoric. To quote Habermas in this context, "when, as Derrida recommends, philosophical thinking becomes released from its duty of solving problems and is turned into literary criticism, it is robbed not only of it's seriousness but of its productivity and efficiency as well."[6]

As it is mentioned earlier, Habermas, who sees there is a complete discontinuity and disarity between modernism and postmodernity, remarks that in modernity there is scientificity, pragmatic approach to solve genuine problems and rationality, Habermas claims these aspects are not there in postmodernity because postmodernism and modernism are simply incommensurable and the discourse of postmodernity is not rationality, scientificity, rather fiction and literature.

Many critics observe that Habermans's attitude towards modernism and postmodernity relationship is necessarily a 'modernistic way of judging'. In the words of Bishop Gregorious, "This attempt fixes him in the modernist rather than postmodernist camp. He (Habermas) is still talking about propositional truth and their legitimization. Thus he is still in the positivist link".[7]

Habermas attacks the concept of postmodernity as "*Die modernity*' and equates it with a new historicism and conservatism. He also levels it with the nomenclature such as "anti-modern", "tendency turn". He observes, the 'postmodern architecture' gives to some extent expressions to pluralism, and postmodernity is a 'programmatic' farewell to 'modernity'.

On the other hand, Jean Francois Lyotard- the most provocative postmodernist - holds that postmodern does not mean anti-modern rather it can be studied as a continuation of modernity. He observes "the whole idea of postmodernism is perhaps better rethought under the rubric of rewriting modernity."[8]

Lyotard obtains the concept of 'postmodernity' from the reflections on the peculiarity of modern knowledge. In short, modern knowledge had the form of unity, and this unity had come into being through the recourse to great meta-narratives. The modernity created three such grounds of metanarratives : the emancipation of humanity (enlightenment) through totalising reason, teleology of spirit (Idealism) and the hermeneutics of the meaning (historicism). The present time is characterized through the

situation where these bringing unities have lost their validity. With this the sense of totality has become obsolete.

The dissolution of the totality is the precondition of postmodern pluralism. But this kind of pluralism is not very original, since such a thought has been articulated since the end of 18th century in Europe, particularly by German romanticism. The loss of totality and the dissolution of unity were lamented by most of the writers till the late 19th century. This irrevocable plurality, which is regarded as positive, is the main focus of postmodernity. The postmodern interest is directed towards the periphery, border zones, areas of conflicts, frictions from which something unknown may emerge, something, which would defy the functional instrumental rationality, something paralogous.

Postmodern science concerns itself with such things as undecidables, the limit of precise control, conflicts characterized by incomplete information, and theorizes its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, non-rectifiable, and paradoxical. It is changing the meaning of the world *knowledge,* while expressing how such a change can take place.

Lyotard sees the emergence of postmodernity primarily from the survey of decisive scientific and theoretical innovations of the 20th century (Einstein, Heisenberg, Godel). He also explains postmodernity with a review of artistic phenomena of 20th century. Hence, Lyotard concludes that postmodernity "is undoubtedly a part of modern."[9] Postmodernism in his view is a phase in modernism, a constant push to negate the existent and produce the new.

Another important thing that can be said about postmodernism is that it takes language to be the model of structural system more deeply than the modernists do. The "linguistic turn" has levied the postmodernist - poststructuralist assumption that language constitutes the human world and the human world constitutes the whole world. For most of this century language has been moving to center stage in philosophy, among figures as diverse as Wittgenstein, Quine, Heidegger, and Gadamer, while growing attention to communication theory, linguistics, cybernetics, and computer languages demostrates a similar emphasis over several decades in science and technology. Foucault and Derrida gave similar emphasis on language as a decisive leap for the formation of new forms of thought.

Jacques Derrida, the pivotal figure of the postmodernism ethos, proceeds as if the connection between words and the world were arbitrary. Derrida believes that the principles laid down by Saussure serve the sweeping and skeptical purpose of undermining a prevailing and generally unconscious 'idealism' which asserts that language does not create meanings but reveals them, thereby implying that meanings pre-exist their expression. For Derrida this is nonsense. For him there can be no meaning, which is not formulated; we cannot reach outside the language.10

This compares philosophy with that of the sheets or papers of the book. Philosophy is within the book, written in all the pages. Thus the margin of philosophy, the edge of the page is its limit. Nothing can be put outside the margin; no philosophy can be written outside page, so to speak, as Derrida writes, *"There is nothing outside of the text (il n'y a pas de hors-texte)...."*[11]

To reiterate, no philosophy exists outside the margin, outside the 'mere' writing. Hence philosophy is appropriated as just writing and is reduced as mere literature of the logos (of the philosophical enterprise). This is outrageously disturbing which hails the end of philosophy by merely contrasting and comparing it to writing.

The postmodern way of reading a text (using a deconstructive reading) is tantamount to destroying the mode of reading traditionally inscribed to this reading. Thus a reading could be without understanding because in the outset, a framework such as Derrida's is misreading all together in this attempt. With this therefore, Derrida eludes understanding as interpretation or by rendering meaning through reading. Gary Madison says that : "Derrida's critique of metaphysics lands us, for all practical purpose, in a debilitating relativism, a kind of philosophical nihilism ... Derrida's handling of texts is 'mutilated or castrated for it is.. Without the claim to knowledge or truth" (1991:121).[12]

Does postmodernism really stand for the end of philosophy ? For David Wood, postmodernism does not entirely push the end but the limit of philosophy. He explains this limit as : "Postmodernism has opened up this scrutiny but it also debunks the nihilistic claim that this is a time to end philosophy. Philosophy is not merely literature because the margin as limit is philosophy. (Wood, xvi.).[13]

Though postmodernism does not out rightly stand for the end of philosophy, but it certainly questions the role of philosophy as a truth seeking enterprise. It raises the issue that philosophy has no legitimate claim to do so as there is hardly any distinction between philosophy and literary criticism. Derrida writes, "Because there is no hard and fast distinction between philosophy, literary criticism and fiction, you cannot confine me to the norm of propositional truths. Everything I write is fiction."[14]

A number of conclusions follow from the above discussion and it can be said that postmodernism : i. Symbolizes a complete radical critique of the notions like absolute truth, totality and universality and upholds plurality, incoherency, etc.; ii. Challenges the quest for philosophic or scientific certitude; iii. Propagates that there is no absolute referent beyond the polysemy of text; iv. Holds that truth is a property of linguistic entities, not an accurate *representant* of the world; v. maintains that there is no fixed meaning of a text, meaning can be inserted, self created and an absence can be read; and (v) observes that there is no clear-cut margin between philosophy, literature and fiction.

NOTES

1. Gregorious, Paulos, Mr., "On Postmodernism", (Transcribed by Dr. R.P.Singh) *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research,* Vol. XIV, No. 3, My-Aug. 1997, p.84.

2. Silverman, Hugh, J., (eds.), *Continental Philosophy Post-modernsm-Philosophy and Arts,* New York and London, Routledge, 1990, p.1.

3. Sturrock, John, *Structuralism,* (ed.) by Justin Wintle, Paladin Graftion Books: A Division of the Collions Publishing Group, London/Glasgow/Toronto, p.137.

4. Habermas, Jurgen, *Der Philosophizsche Diskurs der Moderne (The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Suhrkamp P., Frankfurt, 1985; Cited by Rodolphe Gasche's, in an APA Symposium on Post-modernism and Rationality, December 29, 1988, Published in *The Journal of Philosophy.* 1988, p.528.

5. *Ibid.,* p.528.

6. Habermas, Jurgen, *Der Philosophizsche Diskurs der Moderne p. 246,* Translated and quoted by Rodolphe Grasche's "Post-modernism and

Rationality", *Journal of Philosophy,* op.cit., p. 528.

7. Singh, R.P., *Philosophy : Modern and Postmodern,* Intellectual Publishers, New Delhi, 1997, p. ix.

8. Cf. Lyotard, J.F., "Reecrire La Modernite", *in La Inhuman,* Paris, 1985, pp. 33-34.

9. Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *Postmodern Condition :* A report on Knowledge Benniagton. G., Massumic, B., (Trans.) Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 79.

10. Sturrock, John, *Structuralism,* (ed.) by Justin Wintle, *op. cit.,* p. 137.

11. Derrida, Jacques, Of Grammatology, (Trans.) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, The John Hopkins Press, 1976, pp. 158-9.

12. Madison, Gary, "Beyond Seriousness and Frivolity : A Gadamerian Response to Deconstruction", in Silverman. H.J.(ed), *Gadamer and Hermeneutics,* Routledge, New York. 1991, p.121.

13. Wood, Davis, *Philosophy of the Limit,* London, Unwin Hyman Ltd., London, 1990, p.xvi.

14. For representation examples of this tendency in Derrida, consider - his maxing of the genres of philosophy and literature in Glas : his apparent agreement with valery that Philosophy is a form of Literatrue very close to poetry, *Margins of Philosophy* pp. 294-96; and his denying any hard and fast distinction between the serious and playful, true and fictional in his discussion of Austin and Searle, *Margins of Philosophy,* pp. 321-30, and Glyph 12(1977), 222ff. As Habermas argues it in his excellent discussion of the aesthetic turn in deconstruction, Culler, Ohmann, and Pratt develop this term in a more explicit, full, and consistnet way. See the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, pp. 185-210. (Quoted in Marsh, L., James, "Strategies of Evasion : The Paradox of Self Referentiality and the Postmodern Critique of Rationality." *International Philosophical Quarterly,* Vol. xxix, No. 3, Issue No. 115, Sept. 1989, p. 344.

RECONSTRUCTING THE REAL :
A CONSCIOUSNESS CRITIQUE

Saranga D Baral

Postmodernism and postpositivist realism as antiessentialist discourses have undoubtedly received a wide academic respectability. By persistently constructing exhaustion of essentialisam[1]. postmodernists have justified "poststructuralist celebrations of the jouissance of the freeplay of the signifier"[2]. They believe that 'objective knowledge'[3] is not possible, since there is no knowledge which is not mediated by theory. Despite the postpositivist concurrence with the postmodernist premise of theory dependent knowledge, postpositivist realists reject as futile the former's position on 'objectivity' as an insulated condition of certainty which conceals instead a functionalist assumption[4]. For the realist's theory mediated knowledge is possible, reliable and desirable, because an identity constructed without social significations is seriously misleading and needs to be reinterpreted[5]. In the present context, I propose to contend that such constructedness, logical and coherent as it appears, is inherently deficient, not merely inadequate to decide on the self. In other words, language mediated experience, theory dependent knowledge, being in itself provisional, does not have the clue to the absolute knowledge. In my pursuance of the issue, I would make use of Eastern metaphysics and epistemology and try to show that our constructed identities are more mentalised and conceptual than experiential and liberatory.

By interrogating the originary status of experience antifoundationalists have issued powerful constructivist ideas on the origin and cognitive value of knowledge. They have insisted that only "in this mediated way" does personal experience yield knowledge[6]. I believe that

all these rigorous arguments holding true knowledge as suspect are hardly indicative of the sweat that the truly enlightened undergoes in order to experientially know the truth. Postopositivists are found more oriented towards privileging *desirability* of knowledge, while postomodernists, like disguised nihilists and failed artists are now driven to gay abandon. However, no serious theorist has yet interrogated language or logic which is a fundamentally dualistic mode of knowledge and which supports understandably the very basis of their epistemic negotiations. The decentralist critiques embody, on the other hand, a tendency to bend truth to some form of desirability which is expressly a homocentric concern. Let us now look at Eastern thought on the status of knowledge and experience with a valid question. Does experience lead, if at all, to knowledge?

> According to the Vaiśeṣika philosophy, all experience starts with sense-data or the objects of perception and experience is transient like "an ever shifting phantasmagoria"[7]. The Naiyāyika holds indeterminate perception to be the starting-point of all knowledge, though without a claim to be knowledge itself. On the other hand, determinate perception which follows our conscious assimilation, analysis and discrimination may or may not render knowledge error-free[8]. On the important question of validity or invalidity of knowledge, I would like to rely on Radhakrishnan's rendering of different philosophical positions, which run thus[9].

> The Nyāya holds that the validity of knowledge is not self-established, but is proved by something else. While the Sāmkhya thinks that validity and invalidity are inherent in the cognition itself, the Mimāmsakas believe that validity is due to the cognition itself, while invalidity is due to external causes, so that a cognition must be taken as true until it is proved otherwise. The Buddhists hold that invalidity belongs to all cognitions, and validity will have to be established by some other means. Against all these the Naiyāyika contends that validity and invalidity are established by something independent of the cognition itself. If every cognition were selfevident, there world be no possibility of doubt. So validity is determined by an appeal to facts.

Postpositivist realists appear to enjoy affinity with the Naiyāyika in certain aspects[10] without the latter's view of the mind (*manas*) as 'atomic'

in nature[11], his refutation of the materialistic view of consciousness as the property of the body[12] and his belief in the persistence of the soul[13]. According to *Nyāya Bhāṣya*, the mediation of the manas between the self and the senses is necessary in every act of perception, indeterminate or determinate[14]. To Buddhist logicians, all determinate pereception which is a mind-mediated knowledge is not free from 'preconceptions'[15], hence unreliable in regard to experiencing the non-self self, the absolute reality. Śaṁkara too has stressed the inadequacy of all empirical knowledge so as to lead to the ultimate consciousness, i.e. Brāhman[16]. Despite differences and disputes raised on the nature of cognition, as already dealt with, there remain certain areas of concurrence in their views which are important for their topical relevance at present and which include : [17] (i) the *manas* is a necessary condition of perception, (ii) all perception immediate or inferred is a state of consciousness, (iii) cognition belongs to the self, not to the *manas*, (iv) the self cannot be identified with the body, senses or manas which belong to the object side while the self is the subject, (v) our emancipation or true release (*moksa*) consists in freedom from *samsāra* and rebirth, and (vi) *yogic* practices and meditative processes are enjoined of true knowledge.

It is experience which is regarded as holding the basic clue to establishing the identity of our true self. The constructivists of our age view experience as dubiously "essentialising identity' and 'abetting hegemonies of orthodoxy"[18]. On the other hand, the philosophers of the East, especially Advaita Vedāntists, Saṁkhya and Jaina thinkers, Buddhists and Taoists, emphasize that a definite state of consciousness other than all empirically available experience, is the undisputable mark of knowing our true self. From this perspective of Eastern thought, the reliability of any experience certainly involves the status of consciousness. Western psychology broadly understands consciousness as built up on individual sensations, emotions, personal thoughts, and as William James holds, it is "sensible continuous"[19]. In opposition to the Chārvākas[20] and materialists, the Advaitavadins (non-dualists) maintain that consciousness is eternal and ever present in its immediacy, that it is neither a product of nor dependent on our actions[21]. The Vendanta holds that our perceptions of objects involve both a subjective content and an objective content. The subjective and objective contents belong to mental and material orders of phenomena

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which are equally on the object side, since these depend for their manifestation on the principle of consciousness[22]. In other words, the principle of consciousness reveals both the object cognised and the cognising subject, i.e. the subjective 'I'. This is why the subjective consciousness is not identified as the self. According to Samkara, self-consciousness (*ahamkara*) preceds activity, but is not antecedent to knowledge, as it is itself an object of knowledge[23]. Therefore, true knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of the true self far exceeds inner feelings, sensations and mental thoughts. Our ordinary consciousness of the day-to-day existence is as changing as any other objective content. What is subject to change and modification cannot be accepted as the ultimate reality. The Vedanta has refuted the *Yogācara* theory of the self as a series of impermanent mental states on the ground that this theory of momentariness fails even to account for the facts of memory and recognition[24]. Śamkara has countered the philosophy of void (*śunyavāda*) by answering that the self as a mere void presupposes a cogniser of itself[25]. The mind (*manas*) cannot be said to cognise anything, since the mental states are rendered conscious only by coming into relation with the principle of revelation[26]. Positing the validity of a universal consciousness *Saṁkara's Bhāṣya* on the *Brahma Sūtra* (II.3.7) explains : [27].

> When it is said, It is I who now know what at present exists, it is I who knew the past and what was before the past, it is I who shall know the future and what is after the future, it is implied in these words that, even when the object of knowledge alters, the knower does not alter, for he is in the past, present and the future, as his essence is eternally present.

It is important to remember that this ultimate consciousness is inaccessible to all modes of perception, intelligence, inference which include all our empirical methods of verification, mediation any analysis. To deny or de-essentialise the ultimate reality at this stage only entails a human failure. This is to say that by being conscious of this or that we have chosen to remain as limited humans. But our limitedness or failure on the part of majority does not and cannot undo the truthclaims of some whose number might be dwindling. The *Vendānta* holds that we are conscious of this or that, but we cannot be conscious of consciousness, since consciousness cannot ever become an object of any other consciousness[28].

Because in principle, consciousness is one and indivisible and it is self-shining. Our limited consciousness in ordinary life is a mode of consciousness which is definitely mind-mediated. The empiricists and the Naiyayikas too affirm that in our senseexperiences "the manas comes with lightning speed to reach the sense[29]. Thus the assumption of an eternal consciousness demands its validation beyond the modes of intellect, self-consciousness and mind[30]. The Yoga helps one to attain the highest state of consciousness by stopping the incessant vicissitudes of the mind[31], as well as by helping one blast through the limiting human experiences. Despite the philosophy of the no self (*anatta*) Buddhists admit of *satorial* breakthrough in order to experience the absolute Void (Śunya) which is identified with 'pure consciousness by the Mahayanists and Yogacaras[32]. This highest principle of consciousness known as Brahman or Sunya or pure consciousness is only accessible to immediate, direct, unmediated experience. On the other hand, all concepts, languages, thought and constructed knowledge belong to the realm of the dual, which cannot claim to help us reach the purest realm of the nondual, or as the *Upaniṣad* calls it, *turiya* (the fourth state of the soul). According to *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad,* the fourth is the Ātman, all pervasive and still beyond other states of the soul, whose very nature is absolute knowledge. It explains :[33].

> the fourth is not that which is conscious of the subjective, nor that which is conscious of the objective, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is an all-sentient mass, nor that which is all darkness. It is unseen... Inapprehensible, uninferrable.. the sole essence of the consciousness of the self, the completion of the world..

From the vantage point of this ineffable experience, the Vedāntins, Mahayānists, Jaina Kevalins, Yogins, Taoists and Zen mystics have declared that the objective world is a phenomenon of relations and all its significations are in the nature of the mind constructed. According to the Jaina logic, writes Radhakrishnan : "It is from that higher absolute point of view that the lower relative ones can be explained. All true explanation is from above downwards[34]." Therefore, the mind constructed knowledge in the light of Eastern thought cannot claim to be true knowledge of the self.

Neverthless, I do not believe that our ordinary life situation is merely an abject, unblest phenomenon, or that human existence is an irredeemable,

ungraced event. Let us consider certain essential tenets of great mystical traditions. The Buddhists believe that all beings have already possessed "the Buddha-nature" and because of this fact they are destined to ultimately attain Buddhahood[35]. According to the fundamental Vedic tenets, "I am Brahman", (aham-brahmāsmi) and "Brahman is the highest knowledge" (prajnanam-brahma)[36]. Further, Eastern and Western mystics have emphatically declaimed that the absolute reality is to be experienced 'here' and 'now'. These esteemed statements properly understood indicate not only an unimaginable potency hidden in each of us which could make us greater than what we are, but also something profound and elusive which is continuously happening beneath our wearisome mind and conscious knowledge. I profoundly believe that every experience, indeterminate or constructed, is blissladen in the sense that it carries a pointed richness of the consciousness imperative which is but exploding spontaneously but silently all the while. Unfortunately, for its slickness and subtlety, it cannot ordinarily be concretised into a stable form of knowledge. For the cause of its evanescence our mind is the usual benefiting culprit, since the incessant changes of the mind render all experience unstable[37]. In order to suppress or quiet the mind the wise ancients of the East had invented Yogic processes which produce a final breakthrough. The experience so gained is extraordinary as it reveals the true identity of the self[38]. And at its best it reveals no other identities individual, national, social, political or religious. The experience is self-evident and self-sufficient in the sense that consciousness becomes manifest in its formless wonder and pristine fullness. Emphasizing the free choice of the individual as to seeking the truth, Samkara holds that if the enterprise is taken up, 'the nature of the truth will have only to be accepted by us'[39]. I would like to linger a moment on the significance of such transcendent experience.

The self-evident premise even of all experience is originally free from the mind's constructed significations. The truth of self-evidence is in pure freedom alone and not in some meaningful relevance for human situation or social locations. The event of pure freedom which engenders pure delight is indeed free form our 'I'-perception, our self-conscious ego. This is to say that the self evident norm rising out of the suspension of the mind and ego is not to yield our desirable knowledge, our constructed meaning. But the mind is shocked to inaction only temporarily, and it quickly

collects its severed connections and relations and feels secure in the constructed meaningfullness of our mundane activities. Interestingly, only as the momentousness of pure freedom gives way to constructed knowledge, do we ordinarily realise our situatedness, our social locations, our individual self-importance. We must acknowledge that our mind is purposely engaged to make every experience meaningfurl and also to knit a constructed continuity and historicity of objects and events. The problem with hmanity is that we love to see always the human face in the mirror of consciousnesss. To me every experience is originary in a real sense, which also implies that it has no historical facticity and no express human content[40]. Because experience may be theory mediated, the real essence of experience *per se* is not theoretical : it unsettles theory, it breaks down the mind, it destabilises the cause-effect nexus. This is so because it manifests consciousness in its pure radiance of delight, which belongs to the self[41] and not to the mind or to the anthropocentric ego. The question of its socio-political salience important to postpositivist realism as well as its objective inessentiality relevant to postmodernism is, indeed, a making of the mind. The self-evident consciousness however is not empirically available to prevail over our constructed continuity of the world and its meaning. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the imperative of pure delight alone is the secret magic of life's *livability,* a norm superior to its hedonistic counterpart of *desirability.* All constructivist thesis has given rise to a new magnificence of materialistic philosophy.

Moreover, Eastern philosophy understands the world as a state of conditions of which man is besought to go free. But for the mind, this limiting conditioning existence is a fertile ground for its games and shows to run. By negotiating what is predominantly a nagging experience such as 'anger[42], the constructivists urge us to see that revised interpretations yield knowledge in the same way as new discoveries of science do. It begs the question : Is knowledge thus revised final ? By doubting and prejudging "the epistemic status"[43] of identities and experiences to be gained in the mediated way, one with the traditional Eastern insight would get at this fact that all such knowledge, being itself a product of condition, is sure to condition us again. And again from this angle, the constructed knowledge is merely a wishful freedom. Any thesis or theory dependent for its desirable magnificence on the gross consumable side of a living world is bound to

make both subject and object corruptible. To my mind, there is some positive strength in the Habermasian project of reinventing 'the lifeworld' vis-a-vis postmodernist splintering into independent specillialities'[44]. Neverthless, the critiques of 'subject-centred philosophies of consciousness; which emerge from the subtexts of Habermas, Lyotard, Heidegger and Nietzsche cannot claim to have any deep insight on consciousness. Indicating the ultimate reality in the light of pure consciousness, Eastern philosophy holds.[45].

> Never has the cessation of consciousness been experienced, or witnessed directly; or if it has been, then the witness still remains behind as the continued embodiment of that same consciousness.

A concrete insight into the pure realm of consciousness yields that consciousness is the unborn principle, which is neither annihilated nor created, neither comes nor departs; it simply is. It has neither express human nor antihuman content. All that categorisation into the human or divine, holy or sinful, good or evil, is a product of our mind, our binary dichotomous thinking. From the height of that undifferentiated consciousness man and his object world have fallen into equal grace. Out of this vision is born the philosophy of quiescence, of non-violence and compassion, of abstinence, and freedom from desire, and that philosophy of the universe as our family (vasudha-eva-kutumbakam). Interestingly, Schrodinger, the famous Nobel Laurate for quantum physics (1933) sounds obviously Indian as he holds the multiplicity of the world as deceptive and consciousness as the only reality. He observes[46].

> the only possible alternative is simply to keep to the immediate experience that consciousness is singular of which the plural is unknown; that there is only one thing and that what seems to be a lurality is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception; the same illusion is produced in a gallery of mirrors, and in the same way Gaurisankar and Mt Everest turned out to be the same peak seen from different valleys.

Moreover, it is Heisenberg, the renowned Nobel Laurate for the uncertainty theory (1932), to say " "We cannot know, as a matter of principle, the present in all its details"[47]. In the light of these fundamental discoveries about the micro-world reality, the postmodern constructivists may well have to revise their academic beliefs in antiessentialist projects and theory

dependent knowledge which have been floated as ultimate *mantras* on the self, on true knowledge, on true experience. I am sure our pandering to language games which are sort of mental orgasmics or brain-tickling fantasies will hardly unknot the mystery that life is, that truth is. No language, no logic, is ever a substitute for a *consciousnes experience*. Language is a dualistic mode of perception only.

Moreover, language, the postmodern protege, has no reality, not even its poor shadow in the realm of consciousness. Quantum physicists too recognise as irrelevant to the subtomic reality our usual tools of 'both-and', 'either-or', 'neither-nor' which human language is best capable of Heisenberg expresses his disappointment about language thus[48]

the most difficult problem... concerning the use of the language arises in quantum theory. Here we have at first no simply guide for correlating the mathematical sysbols with concepts of ordinary language; and the only thing we know from the start is the fact that our common concepts cannot be applied to the structure of the atoms.

The fact that the truth cannot be expressed except in language or logic has led us to more language indulgence, whereas it had once led the unlettered, uncouth ancients to explore the deepest realms of reality, of consciousness. It is interesting to hear Eugen Wigner among other quantum physicists saying : "it was not possible to formulate the laws of [quantum theory] in a fully consistent way without reference to consciousness"[49]. It is the deepest insight of consciousness which has led Eastern mystical traditions to propound that all the concepts that man uses to describe nature are limited, that they are not features of reality, but 'creations of the mind'[50]. In our ordinary life, Heisenberg has to say : "What we observe is not Nature itself, but Nature exposed to our method of questioning'[51]. It is imperative now that we question our methods of questioning, because 'the basic building blocks' of matter are not clearly set determinates, neither particles nor waves, neither real nor unreal, but are "tendencies" and "probabilities"[52]. This micro-world reality of the quantum 'field' bring alive a distant echo from the Vedanta or even from the Buddhist view of Nothingness such as phrased by Aśhwaghośa[53].

Suchness (Nirvāna/Nothingness) in neither that which is existence, nor that which is nonexistence, nor that which is at once existence

and nonexistence, nor that which is not at once exstence and non-existence.

One could well see here how language fails to positively invoke reality. In summing up I will observe that all essentist and antiesentialist discourses are far from proper studies of reality, since they lack that all-important experience or vision, the consciousness - centered vision of the true reality. Once we know the real, the one, we would, like the Buddhists and Vedantins, say that the empirical world is neither real nor unreal, that our great achievment, let alone concepts, are mere provisionalities subject to endless revision. More importanty, we have to know that consciousness or its essence has no centre to be decentered, no structure to be dismantled, though it is wonderfully one and all-expansive. In order that we know the principle of consciousness, we have first to abandon the self-conscious thinker as well as the thinking. In order that we move a step closer to this stage, we must accede to certain self-imposed moral ethics. This would enable us to live profoundly this world, this interconnected phenomenon as a moral order of eternal renewal and inexhaustible beauty. And this would energize us to *play* here practicing compassion. Because our self-centered hedonistic plays, which I call mind constructed belief, have yielded enough poison to corrupt a living world. I do believe that all consciousness experience is truly and effectively compassionate.

NOTES

1. Essentialist thought presupposes a stable entity called a self which has access to inner states and the outer world; it is like an immutable ground free from emotional and institutional determinants and achieves freedom of thought. See Patricia Waugh, *Practising Postmodernism / Reading Modernism,* London : Edward Annod, 1992, p. 67.

2. *Ibid* p. 29.

3. The idea of 'objective knowledge' refers to an ahistorical error-free truth a stable self-evident certainty. See Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames - Garcia (ed), *Reclaiming Identity,* India ; Orient Longman, 2001, pp. 12, 32 and 36.

4. See Satya P. Mohanty in *Reclaiming Identity,* p. 36.

5. Paula Moya, (*op. cit.* p. 12), holds the postpositivist conceptualization that

'a theory mediated objective knowledge is both possible and desirable'. See also Satya P. Mohanty, (op.cit.pp.32&36) who stresses the reliability, genuineness and accuracy of such theory dependent knowledge.

6. Satya Mohant *op.cit.* p.33.

7. See S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol-II, New Delhi : OUP, p.229, 237. I greatly depended on his *Indian Philosophy* for a wealth of information of source materials and references.

8. *Ibid*, p.60; also in *Nyāya Bhāṣya*, III. 2. 37.

9. S. Radhakrishnan, *Ibid*, p. 125, 406.

10. *Ibid*, pp. 151, 174.

11. *Ibid*, pp. 147.

12. *Ibid*, pp. 69, 146, 148, 408.

13. *Ibid*, p. 149.

14. The concept of *manas* roughly translated as 'mind', would demand a whole volume for its detailed treatment. It has always remained a subtle, rich and complex phenomenon of life. In the *Saṁkhya* system. Vacaspati accepts the activity of *manas* as necessary for perception; Vijnanabhikshu denies it and holds *buddhi* to be directly coming into touch with the objects through the senses (S. Radhakrishnan. vol. II. p. 298). In the *Nyāyavarttikia* iii. I. 17 Uddyotakara holds that manas can be directly perceived through yougic processes (S. Radhakrishnan, ibid. pp. 51n, 52/3). According to the *Yoga Vasistha*, manas, buddhi, citta, kalpana, smriti etc. are different only in name; in reality they signify the same concept, namely, the active functioning of manas or citta. See Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* vol-11, Cambridge UP. 1932, pp. 238, 236. Samkara conceives manas as a mode of the internal organ (*antah karana*), a mode of indetermination. See S. Radhakrishnan, *op.cit*, vol-II. PP. 486-7 & 487 n, 493. To me manas appears as a limiting, conceptualizing mode of consciousnes and involved in all our intellectual understanding, analysis, thought processes, thus making experiences meaningful, but it is far short of achieving the ultimate consciousness.

15. See S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.* pp. 60 & 61 n.

16. *Ibid*, p. 502.

17. *Ibid*, p. 147, 147n; 151 & 164.

18. See *Reclaiming Identity,* p. 280.

19. See William James, The Priciples of Psychology in *Great Books of the Western World,* vol-53, U. of Chicago, 1952 pp. 145, 155.

20. The materialist Charvakas (or, Lokayatikas) hold that matter can think, what is not perceivable is nonexistent, and that "the Atman is the body itself". See S. Radhakrishnan, vol-I, pp. 278-9, 280-1 and vol-II p. 478.

21. *Ibid,* vol-II, p. 474.

22. See S. N. Dasgupta, *op. cit.,* vol-II, p. 13, 16.

23. S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.,* vol-II, p. 479.

24. *Ibid,* pp. 478-9.

25. *Ibid,* pp. 478.

26. *Ibid,* p. 346, and S. N. Dsgupta *op. cit.,* vol-II, p. 15.

27. See *Bhagavata Gāā,* II. 18, and see S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., vol-II, p. 480.

28. S. N. Dasgupta *op. cit.,* p. 14.

29. S. Radhakrishnan *op. cit.,* vol-II, p. 50.

30. *Ibid,* p 345. .

31. According to Patanjali's *Yoga-sūtra, Citta-vritti nirodha* means *yoga.* See S. Radhakrishnan *ibid* p. 337.

32. *Ibid,* pp. 469-71, 665/6; see Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India,* London : Routlege & Kegan, 1969 (4th print); p. 525.

33. *Mandukya Upanisad I* 7 ; and S. Radhakrishnan *op. cit.,* vol-I p. 160.

34. See S. Radhakrishnan *op. cit.,* vol-I p. 306.

35. See D T. Suzuki, *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism,* London Rider, 1963, p. 27.

36. *Aitareya Upaniṣad* III. 1.3; *Brihadaranyak Upaniṣad* I 4.19; IV. 4. 12 & 13 Further in the Islamic tradition Hallaj said : ana I-haqq. which means 'I am the Absolute Truth' See Steven I Katz, *Mysticism and Religious Traditions,* London. OUP, 1983, p. 143 and see also n. C. Panda, *Maya in Physics,* Delhi : Motital B. D., 1996, p. 258

37. In Eastern metaphysics, all experience therefore is suspect. Constructivists too hold emotion to be belonging to the realm of the uncertain. See *Reclaiming Identity,* p. 192.

38. The true self is not to be identified with Kant's 'transcendental ego'. In

Radhakrishnan's view, though Kant's idea transcends "empirical consciousness, it is still individualized, since it becomes the practical will". Śaṁkara's self is "something perfect and not in process of growth". See S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., vol-II, p. 484.

39. *Samkara's Bhasya I.* 1. t: see S. Radhakrishnan, *ibid,* p. 494.

40. According to the Advaita Vedanta "knowledge has no history, while our mental life has one. Perception and inference serve as vehicles for the revelation of knowledge under the limitations of empirical life". see S. Radhakrishnan, *ibid,* vol-II, p. 499.

41. The self-evident character of the true knowledge, according to the Advaita Vedanta, bears immediate witness to its own validity but is hidden by our psychological prejudices See S. Radhakrishnan, *ibid,* p 500.

42. Among others Satya P. Mohanty considers Scheman's example of Alice's "anger" and concludes in favour of theory dependent knowledge as reliable. See *Reclaiming Identity, op-cit.* p. 36.

43. *Idbi,* p. 32/3, Naiyayikas were aware of the limitation of revising perception by means of empirical facts, since it is subject to endless revision and "infinite regress". See also S. Radhakrishnan, *op-cit,* p. 173.

44. See Patricia Waugh, *Practising Postmodernism, op-cit.* p. 30.

45. *Devi Bhagavata III* 32. 15-16, see S. Radhakrishnan op.cit. vol-I, p. 161.

46. See N. C. Panda, *Maya in Physics,* p. 343.

47. *Ibid,* pp. 94.

48. *Ibid,* pp. 32/3.

49. *Ibid,* p. 343-Eu gen Wigner suggests about "the formal inclusion of consciousness in physics/" to be helpful in "furthering advance in our scientific understanding." See also Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics,* Toronto Bantam, 1984, p. 291.

50. See F. Capra, *op. cit.,* p. 147.

51. See Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy,* New York ; Harper & Row, 1958, p. 58 and see also N. C. Panda, *op.cit.* p. 102.

52. See F. Capra, *op-cit,* p. 138/9.

53. *Ibid,* p. 139.

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CAN THERE BE RIGHT WITHOUT THE SENSE OF DUTY ? *

RAGHUNATH GHOSH

I

This paper intends to focus on the concept of right in Indian tradition and to consider whether right is possible independent of the sense of duty and not particularly in the context of human right in the present day society.

At the outset to think about human rights reminds me two cruel scenes in public places, which are as follows. One fine morning I was passing through a market place and found a child of ten years cleaning utensils in a tea-stall and another one of the same age was breaking coal. It reminds me an advertisement telecast in the National channel of Television where there are repeated instructions for not using children as labours, and allowing them to avail their own right of proper education. It is really pathetic indeed to see a scene where some beggars are sharing foods left in the garbage with a few dogs. These scenes are enough to prove that human beings are not given even the rights of food leading to their survival. The scenes just narrated reflect a picture of the struggle for existence, which is at stake in this society not to speak of exerting right.

Human beings are the best creation of God as observed by a Vaisnava poet - śunaha mānuṣ bhāi sabār upare mānuṣ satya tāhār upare nāi (i.e. human being should be aware of the fact that humanity is above all and nothing exists beyond it) and hence among all forms of right the question of human right comes first. The human prosperity, the exert of right, human pleasure etc. depend more or less on social situations. Each and every

human being has got some duties towards the society an social beings. For the greater interest of the society an individual should forsake his own narrow self-interest and take part in various voluntary social works. One should perform some work for the welfare and happiness of the mass- *bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya*. Under such a situation a man can exert his own right, because right and duty are mutually dependent and hence it is called two sides of the same coin. Without the sense of duty right cannot be enjoyed and if right is not provided, the question of duty cannot be raised. The idea - 'I have my own right' presupposes that others would recognize my right and allow me to enjoy the same. If we accept or demand our rights, we should adhere to the fact that the other human beings have also got their rights, which we should honor. A civil society is marked by the presence of multiple styles of life and coexistence of multiple units. Multiplicity and pluralism shape the situation of life in contemporary society. A civil society provides organic space for a variety of pluralisms - ideological (social representations), cultural (psychological), political (attitudes) and philosophical (principles). The specific problem that a civil society faces would be in conceiving unity in multiplicity or unity in plurality. The answer to the problem lies in the philosophy of human right. The existential human consciousness in India is looking for such a philosophy built on the premise that life is a trinity of shared life, knowledge and love.

Pluralism of any sort- cultural, attitudinal, representational or religious presupposes the existence of others than myself. But (a) who is the other? (b) How do I or we relate with him or them ? The responses of these questions would span ethics and metaphysics and the whole field of inter-subjectivity. The general object of human right is human life, namely, the possibility and need of life, dignity with others, i.e., one possessed of a quality with exemplary value. The philosophy of human right is a defense and acknowledgment of the value and dignity of life in necessary terms. It should also be noted that there is a virtual link between a philosophical foundation of human rights and possible metaphysical and religious interests. A rejection of violence is one of the minimum common denominators of all sorts of religions. Philosophically speaking the concept of human rights implies inter-subjectivity or the existence of others. This is the basis of ethics or the sense of duty. No one, as Plato observes, is 'self-sufficing' there are many things, which we want for our lives. Hence there arises

the question of exchange. It is possible if 'one gives and another receives under the idea that the exchange will be for their good'. From this it follows that, when a man discharges his duties, other person can exert his right. Plato's observation that no one is self-sufficing and there arises the question of exchange reminds me the derivative meaning of the term 'ought' used to convey the sense of duty, which comes from the verb 'owe'. In old English the past tense form of the verb 'owe' is 'ought', which implies that the sense of 'ought' may come in one's mind if one thinks that one owes (ṛṇa) something from others. In other words, one will have a sense of duty if one has a feeling of gratitude to others for their free exercise of right. Hence the term ṛṇa may be taken as the sense of obligation to them who have performed their duties to them. From this it can be decided that the sense of morality denoted by the term 'ought' cannot be imposed on an individual, rather it comes form within when he thinks himself ṛṇi or obliged to others[2]. Someone can do his right and duty if he feels a sense of obligation to others. Since the individuals find that occupation which is in accord with their respective natures and nearest and dearest to their hearts, there is no room for dissatisfaction and the consequent frustration. The satisfaction of the individual arising from the performance of the duties of their station and the exercise of right furthers the efficient use of their talents. Social progress is ensured since each individual is eminently suited to the performance of the duty that he is allotted. The naturality with which he discharges his duty and exercises his right adds to the case and grace of the performance.

II

According to Oxford Dictionary, a right is a justifiable claim on legal or moral grounds to have or obtain something, or to act in a certain way. A right may be a legal right, that is a right that can be enforced through a court of law, such as a 'right of way' and the legal aspects of such a right are matters of jurisprudence, the science of law. On the other hand, a right may be entirely a moral right and one which a court of law will not enforce, such as the right of a parent to obedience on the part of his children or the right of an old man to respect. A right may be a right to control some material object such as a piece of property, or a right to make use of the service of others as in a contract of employment. For ethics the question is: what are the moral grounds on which the claim to do or to enjoy in these

cases is justified ? The common answer is that a right is justified by the fact that the ability of an individual to assert it is for the common good. It is for the good of the community that certain rights, like the right to property, should be so enforceable, and others, like the right of respect, should not be so enforceable.

The word 'duty', like the word 'right' has more than one use both in common speech and in ethics. One of the ways of describing a good action is to say it is our duty to do it. The action which is our duty to do differs from a right action in two ways : a) It implies that only one action is right for us at particular moment, because if it were equally right to do two alternative actions, we would not be able to say either of them that it is our duty to do it. b) It emphasizes that the action is not merely fitting but that is obligatory. Duties are often right actions which many people are tempted to avoid doing. The most prominent good effects of duties are on people other than the doer of action. It may be one of the reasons for avoiding our duties.

'Duty', however, is used in a more specialized way as the correlative to word 'right'. If a right is a justifiable claim in a community, a duty is the obligation to fulfil that claim. A duty may be defined as the obligation of an individual to satisfy a claim made upon him by the community, or some other individual member or members of that community, in the name of the common good. The child has a right to education, so it is the duty of his parents or of the state generally to provide him with this education. The purchase of a railway ticket shows how rights and duties are relative to each other. The railway authorities have a right to be paid; the traveller has the duty of paying the fare; the traveller has the right of being conveyed to his destination; the railway company has duty of providing the conveyance. This obvious relation between rights and duties in a contract has given plausibility to the view that all morality depends on a 'social contract'. The criminal law in India is explicitly laid down. There is a good deal to be said for this theory as an explanation of some of the rights and duties, which have a clear reference to the social organization in which they occur, and particularly of those moral rights and duties which are maintained by the laws of the state. It certainly does not explain all our moral duties, which includes the duty to waive our rights in certain circumstances.

A right may involve a duty in two different ways. A) If an individual

has a right, some other individual or individuals must have the duty of satisfying the claim, which is recognized by that right. The child's right to education implies a duty on the part of his parents or of the state to provide him with that education. In some cases, a duty related to a right is not so obvious, because it is largely a negative duty or a duty on the part of abstaining from something. A man's right to the use of his own property implies a duty on the part of his neighbors to refrain from encroaching on that property. B) If an individual has a right, it is his duty to use that right for the common good of his community. It is, for example, the duty of a child to use his education in such a way that he may become a useful member of society. From the point of ethics there is general agreement that the fact that a man has right does imply that he has a duty to use that right in a way that is either for the benefit of his fellowmen, or society. If he fails to do so, he will be using his fellowmen merely as means. It is just because of this duty to use a right for the common good that it is sometimes a man's duty to assert that right, and sometimes it is his duty to waive the same right. The deciding factor is his knowing which course of action will in the special circumstances of each case lead to the larger addition to the common good.

In the case of universal duties the right does not hold good. The buddist *pañcaśila,* the injuctions of *sādhāraṇa dharma* are instances of universal duties irrespective of corresponding rights. The duties are said to be known by intuition But difficulties arise when two duties come to a conflict, for example, respect for social order and respect for social change towards progress. This is a matter of greatest difficulty.

What does it mean to say that a duty is universal ? Does it mean that it is obligatory on every man in every situation to perform that duty ? Justice is a duty of this kind. There are two interpretations of universality: a) Injunctions are obligatory for always. For example, refrain from stealing. The command - "Speak the truth' is interpreted as the command not to be always speaking the truth but to speak the truth when occasion demands. It is not arbitrary that often the universal duties are put into negative forms, e.g. *ahiṁsā, asteya,* non-killing and non-stealing. In this respect universal commands are prohibitions in disguise. But there may be considerable difference of opinion as to what is included in the prohibition. Does murder include killing under extreme provocation, killing in self-defence, the inflicting

of capital punishment, killing in war, and the killing of lower animal ? The issue of stating universal duties even in negative form is quite impracticable.

III

That in some cases the right and duty are interrelated is evidenced from the Sanskrit word - *adhikāra,* which implies both right and duty. The term *adhikāra* is generally used in the sense of duty and right or authority. If it is *'adhikāro dattah',* the term is used in the sense of taking charge of something. If it is uttered - *svādhikārāt pramattah',* it is in the sense of duty i.e., forgetful about one's duty. In other usages like *'adhikāre mama putrako niyuktah'* (i.e., my son is appointed to the post of authority) and *'karmanevādhikāraste mā phalesu kadācana'* (i.e., your *adhikāra* is in performing work, not in result), the term *adhikāra* is used in the sense of authority or right and duty respectively. If it is said that an individual has got equal access to all the branches, the word 'access' can be expressed with the word - *'adhikāra'* from which the term *adhikārī* i.e., having eligibility of receiving different philosophical doctrines is derived. If I accept or demand my own right, it presupposes that other human beings have also got their rights, which I should admit. On account of this the Sanskrit term - *'adhikāra'* implies both right and duty. Without the cooperation of the two one cannot survive in our society. The term 'right' is also used in the sense of possession (*svattva*) and owner (*svāmitva*). The Grammarians have laid down the rule of using genitive in this sense as known from the sūtra - *'saṣthi śeṣe'.* Moreover, *Yājñavalkyasaṃhitā* in the *vyavahāra adhyāya* has discussed at length on the right of the property of the Brahmins, women (*strīdhana*), different types of sons like adopted son, step son etc.

Let us look at the situations of our country. We shall see how human rights are given to the social beings leading to their non-survival in this age. Viewing various inhuman activities around us, one's mind becomes hard and heavy. Under this situation he does not hesitate to start committing offences. When everyone is committing the harmful works, what is, he thinks, the use of becoming an honest and innocent ? Committing such offensive works his heart naturally becomes mechanical destroying its sensitivity. Through the 'mechaniztion of heart' as coined by Swami Vivekananda he will turn into an inhuman being. Bhatrhari describes these so-called inhuman beings as 'devilish persons or *mānavarākṣasāh,* who

will think for their own benefit after doing harms to others. (*Temi mānavarākṣasāḥ parahitam svārthāya nighnanti ye*). To Bhatrhari 'there are some good people *satpuruṣas,* who engage themselves in the good of others sacrificing their own self-interest; the *sāmānyas,* the generality of people, on the other hand, are those who engage themselves in the good of others so long as it does not involve the sacrifice of their own self-interest. There are those others, the *manavaraksakas,* devilish men, who sacrifice the good of others to gain their own selfish ends; but alas, what am I to say of those who sacrifice the good of other without gaining thereby any good to themselves or to any one else.[3]. The *satpuruṣas* or good men have got their overwhelming goodness, which is not vitiated by their selfish motive, and hence they have glorified their existence. If such persons would engage themselves to serve their own self-interest without paying any heed to the welfare of others, they are not at all *sat* due to not having a harmony between duty and right. An individual should have right to attain his own interest but at the same time he should maintain his duty towards the society. During the reign of devilish people as mentioned, human right hardly finds any meaning. At this stage he tries to develop or satisfy his biological or physical needs, but fails to develop his moral health. Due to the lack of moral education a man dares to adopt unfair means to fulfil his own interest. Under such cases self-interest may be fulfilled some times at the cost of others life. Hence this type of people is called devil in the form of a man. When a man is found carrying another man keeping him on board of a rickshaw, is it not an uncivilized act or an act of barbarism ? When an individual is selling adulterate medicines and baby foods for fulfilling his narrow desire, we do not raise any question about the human rights of parents and babies, who are dying after consuming such food or medicines. A beggar suffers from a serious illness, still he is found begging on the road under the scorching heat of the sun and through heavy dusty air. If he is paid a coin, will it be the end of our responsibility towards them ? Moreover, if we go through the pages of the newspaper, we very often come across the reports of murders, robberies, rapes of the innocent girls, burning of brides etc. There are many instances where human beings are utilized as commodities. Still the curses like untouchability, exploitation, sexual harassment, bribery etc. remain in full swing in our society. Though there is an effort from the Government level to make people conscious

about the bad effects of untouchability, dowry system, and child abuse etc. through various media, a very little effect has been achieved. Various Government and voluntary organizations like Human Rights Commission, Consumer courts etc. have been instituted to protect human rights of the people. These incidents occur due to the non-protection of human rights. We witness the most wretched and miserable life of the downtrodden, street beggars, pavement dwellers and overlook the painful conditions of them without protecting their rights for survival. The people of our country will never be patriotic, good or kind-hearted so long the painful and tragic scenes of the downtrodden are not eliminated totally. If the youths of our society were not properly brought up in calculating in them the value of fellow feeling, compassion and other human qualities, their rights would not have replaced the unfortunate and cruel treatment of human beings. Today an individual is nothing but some devilish person - *'kascit yaksa'* who has lost the sense of his duty and right - *'svadhikarapraattah'* as coined by Kalidasa in his *Meghadutam*. This situation can be overcome through restoring the sensitivity of our mind so that we may think of protecting others right as human being and provide minimum necessity for their survival. The moral health of the nation depends on the immense group. The self-criticism is a sure sign of the basic health of our society and it will slowly generate necessary moral forces to cure the nation of its present ailments. The ailment is a moral ailment and the remedy has to be a moral one. Cynicism, self-centredness, and utter unconcern for others are more deadly than the most deadly physical diseases and viruses that cause them; for they corrode the nation's resolve to be free, to be united and to march onward to progress. We cannot be blind to the fact that this disease has already invaded our body - political, including our youths. We have to take energetic measures to arrest the further progress of this disease and to eliminate it from body politic. And the society has to be alert thereafter to see that these deadly mental viruses do not invade our society again A judge must punish an offender - but this punishment must be according to the offence. It should at the same time be kept in mind that the punishment should not be inhuman. To punish someone does not mean the exercise of our cruel hearts, but that justice should be taken as ideal when a judge will have the same sensitive mind in punishing the offender who is also a human being having right of his survival and who is repenting for being punished.

(*Danditer sāthe daṇḍadāta kāṇde yave samān āghāte sarvasreṣṭha se vicār*).

NOTES

* This is a revised version of the paper presented in the seminar on '*Ethics of Right*' organized by the Department of Special Assistance, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar in 2002.

1. J.D.Kaplan (Ed) : *Dialogues of Plato*, p. 276, Pocket Library, 1959.

2. Raghunath Ghosh : *Sura, Man and Society : Philosophy of Harmony in Indian Tradition,* Academic Enterprise, Calcutta, p. 29, 1994.

3. "Eke satpuruṣāḥ parārthaghaṭakāḥ svārthān parityajya ye,

   Samānyāstu parārthamudyamabhṛtāḥ svārthāvrodhena ye;

   Temi mānavarākṣasāḥ parahitam svārthāya nighnanti ye,

   Ye tu ghnanti nirārthakam parahitam te ke na jānīmahe."

   Nītiśātaka by Bhatṛhari, Verse No. 64.

   Swami Ranganathananda : *Eternal Values for a Changing Society,* p. 580, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1971.

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UNDERSTANDING BIVALENCE

Amiyansu Deb

I have read with interest Prof. Amit Kr. Sen's 'A Reply to "Apology for Bivalence" published in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly,* Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, October, 2001. I am thankful to Prof. Sen for his observations on Chapter VI, entitled 'Apology for Bivalence' of the book.

However, it appears to me that Sen's observations are somewhat hasty. He observes :

a) Prof. Deb's view is one-sided.

b) Non-bivalent semantics is possible, where Law of Excluded Middle is dropped, and

c) Strawson in criticising Russell on the status of a sentence with empty subject term was not at all worried about egocentric words.

His observations are based on his summarisation of Chapter VI of the book mentioned above as my rejection of :

i) the concept of non-bivalued, logic.

ii) the concept of dropping 'Law of Excluded Middle', and

iii) Strawson's notion of truth-value gaps.

I consider his observations to be out of context and his summarisation misleading.

I do not really understand what Sen actually means by his observation a), i.e. my view is onesided. Any theorist is under obligation to justify his own view and refute the views of his opponents. This cannot make his own view one-sided. However, this is indeed one-sided if he fails to show any interst in refuting the views and arguments of his opponents. I like to point out that I have devoted two chapters, Chapter II entitled 'Strawson's

Interpretation of Traditional forms', and Chapter III entitled 'Strawson on Existential Import of General Propositions', to the exposition and criticism of the 'formalistic' and the 'realistic' solutions of the problem of existential commitment of general propositions, as offered by Prof. P.F.Strawson. Both the chapters involve comparative analysis and refutation of his solutions.

Further, the views of various critics of bivalent logc, namely, Lukasiewiez, Brouwer, Nelson, Smiley, P.K.Sen, Rom Harre, Nicod, A.R.Anderson, N.D.Belnap, as also of others, have been duly weighed and evaluated before adopting my standpoint. I have no competence to judge whether my arguments are right or wrong, but I may boldly claim that they are not one-sided in any of the accepted senses. Still further, my conclusion at the end of chapter II of the book is a stout rejection of one-sided-ness :

> We, therefore, conclude that whether universal propositions have existential import or not would depend on the context in which they are used just as whether 'or' is used in the inclusive or exclusive sense depends upon the context of its use. Any rule of thumb will do violence on ordinary speech.

As to Sen's observations under (b) that non-bivalent semantics is possible where LEM is dropped, I have only to point out that such an observation need not have been made, as it is only a truism. The relevant question is : 'Whether LEM can be dropped in our consideration of facts.' Sen's observation (b) is an admission of the fact that bivalence is inextricably connected with LEM. This is exactly the stand-point of modern formal logic. It only points out that sentences in ordinary discourse are often recalcitrant to LEM, and therefore, to bivalent logic. But at the same time it holds that human endeavour to get into truths of fact compels us to translate such sentences of ordinary discourse into those of an ideal artificial language strictly amenable to LEM. So sentences in ordinary language need some marshalling before being used as inputs in formal logic. The inputs here, as elsewhere, are processed datas. Sen's observation (b) does not claim that LEM can be dropped, nor do I lay down anywhere that even if LEM be dropped non-bivalent semantics is not possible. What I really favour is the neat simplicity of an artificial, ideal, language strictly based on LEM into which vague and ambiguous sentences of the ordinary language

may be translated with a view to revealing their logical structure and carrying out the deductive process effectively. Chapter I of the book entitled 'Logic of Language' is only a recommendation for elimination of the vague, emotive and ambiguous elements of ordinary speech for the same purpose. Never-the-less, I have carefully noted :

> Propositions of ideal language do not plan to replace ordinary language in day to day communication. But what is good for day to day communication may not be so as a logical tool.[2]

His observation (b) is in no way opposed to my idea as expressed in pages 69-70 of the book. I have categorically declared :

> LEM holds between contradictories alone.[3]

> The field of LEM is the field of bivalence.

Sen's observation (c) that Strawson is not at all worried about ego-centric words is aimless. The very first paragraph of Strawson's famous paper 'On Referring' shows his concern, if not worry, about such words. But Strawson has his own way of dealing with them. It appears to me that one of his main concerns is to solve the problem arising out of the inconsistant triad formed by (i) ordinary discourse, (ii) formal logic, and (iii) ego-centric words, like 'this', 'that', 'he', 'she', 'I' etc. Could Prof. Sen find time to run his eyes down the chapter entitled 'Logic of Language' (Chapter I) of the book *Logical Studies,* he would not possibly miss the following lines that give a glimpse of Strawson's line of thinking :

> Ordinary language philosophers hold that our language conveniently uses different expressions with different senses to refer to the same thing, i.e. 'the morning star' and 'the evening star', as also the same word with the same sense to refer to different things, such as 'this', 'that,' 'I', 'you', 'here', 'there', 'now', 'then', 'past', 'present', 'future' etc. This feature of language is wholly repugnant to the scheme of the ideal language with a one-to-one relation between the word and the object. Strawson dwells at length upon the way the latter group of words may deprive the phrases of which they are parts of any fixed reference in spite of their fixed meaning.[4]

He declares that ordinary language has no logic. My point is that ordinary language does have a logic though it may often fail to reveal the same. It contains a logical structure merged in superficialities that are obstructions

to its logical treatment. It is only by sheering ordinary language of these superficialities, which are emotive or rhetorical in character, that we may reveal the statements that the language unambiguousluy contains and subject them to further logical process. Ordinary language contains elements that are alogical and conceals what it really implies. It is by translating the sentence of ordinary discourse 'All ravens are black' to one of artificial language '(x) (Rx ⊃ Bx)', that we clearly understand that (i) it is not merely a statement about ravens, but actually a statement about everything in the universe, that (ii) it only states that if anything in the unnverse be raven, then it is also black, and that (iii) it does not commit itself either to the existence of ravens or to the existence of black things, but only to a relation between the class of ravens and the class of black things, such that the statement would be false if the class of ravens be a filled class and the class of black things be a null class.

Prof. Sen's idea that logic is dependant on the philosophical and epistemological standpoints adopted by a thinker[5] is not acceptable. Logic is context free. Its laws and principles cannot lose or gain their validity on account of the motive or standpoint an individual adopts, Philosophers with sharp logical tools for each which are without any bearing on others, are but captives in their world of personal logic. They cannot communicate with each other. No one can compare his views with those of others. Such a situation would render all discussions, seminars, symposia and conferences impossible. Under such circumstances, how is Prof. Sen with his personal philosophic standpoint justified to comment on the book of others with their different philosophic standpoints ? Prof. Sen is indeed justified to come forward with his comments and this is because there is a common logic acceptable to all. Otherwise, the world we inhabit would be an intolerable world of totally unrelated individuals. A world where every individual would have the right to justify his views by his personal logic framed according to his motives and standpoint, would be cherished by autocrats and despots, where might would be right. Human society must have a yardstick, a commonly acceptable measuring rod, to resolve differences and go forward. Formal logic offers such a measuring rod. Prof. Sen would not possibly crave for a world without such a measuring rod for resolving conflicts and differences.

The truth-tables of Sen are fit for resolving epistemic issues, not

ontological ones. In the field of knowledge P may have three values :

   i) P is known to be true = t

   ii) P is known to be false = f

   iii) P is neither known to be true,

        nor known to be false = O

But in the field of being, either P is true or P is false. Here there is no scope for P being neither. So in the field of ontology P may have two and only two values :

   i) P is true = t, and

   ii) P is false = f

    There is no scope of P being neither true nor false, i.e. P being truth-value-less, in the ontic sense.

    P = Water expands when frozen,

a scientist devises experiments to show if P is true or false unconditionally, i.e. in the ontic sense. But one may know P to be true, or know P to be false, or know nothing about the truth-value of P. In the latter case alone we may apply the truth-tables of Sen in which 'P' means, 'P is known to be true'. Since 'P is known to be true' admits of three values, and '~P' means 'P is known to be false.' the two, 'P' and '~P', cease to be contradictories and fall ourside the scope of LEM.

    We must bear in mind that science is interested in knowing the ontic character of things, and logic to be of any use to scientific investigations must accept 'P' and '~P' as contradictories leaving no provision for any third value of 'P'. This brings logic strictly within the scope of LEM and bivalence.

    In the Table-1 it appears that Sen introduces a distinction between 'P' and 'TP', and again between '~P' and '~TP'.[6] These distinotions remove Sen's semantics to a clumpsy distance from common mode of speech. If Sen has seriously accepted such distinctions, then he should have written a 'T' before every sentence of his paper, for he regards each of the sentences to be true. Neither common speech, nor the language of science accepts such a distinction. When we are told by a religious preacher, and a scientist, and a geometrician, respectiverly :

   i) God is Omniscient,

ii) All material bodies gravitate,

iii) All angles of a triangle are together equel to two right angles.

they cannot mean anything other than that these sentences are true. The introductory 'It is true that' is thus a burden on language that may be considered redundant and misleading. this may be avoided without loss. If it is necessary, then to mean that 'TP' is true, we would be required to write 'TTP' and to mean '~P' is true we would have to write 'T~P'. This process would be unending and make expressions unnecessarily cumbersome. In mathematics too, it is not necessary to write '+2' to indicate the positive value of 2. Merely writing '2' is enough for the purpose. Propositions or statements are truth-claims and they must be treated as such. If the truth of a proposition be not borne out by facts, we may indicate the situation by prefixing 'It is false that' or '~' before the proposition. Further, it appears from Sen's Table - 3, for $P \supset Q$ that whenever P is false or Q is true, $P \supset Q$ becomes true.[7] This is an acceptance of the 'Paradoxes of Material Implication' of which non-bivalent logicians are so critical. P.F. Strawson has condemned the idea of '~P' entailing '$P \supset Q$' in the strongest possible terms. In the language of Strawson, examples of arguments of the form ' ~P' entailing '$P \supset Q$' are chartacterised by "appearance of lunatic irrelevance".[8] This remark of Strawson cancels Sen's table for '$P \supset Q$' i.e. his T-3.

Sen's example of a proposition, 'John is tall', is really unhappy. Its predicate 'tall' is notorious for its vagueness. It does not have any fixed meaning. If John is 6' Smith is 5'.6". and Dick is 6'.6" then the prosposition 'John is tall' is true for smith, but false for Dick. Thus whether the proposition is true or false, depends on who makes the judgment. But as we know, the truth-value of a proposition cannot thus change with the change of context. The word 'tall', therefore, cannot be a fit candidate to be a predicate in a logical proposition. When a proposition is true, it is true for all time and for everybody. Similarly, when a proposition is false, it is so for all time and for every body. The truth-value of a proposition is context-free. It is theerefore, advisable to substitute '6'' for 'tall' in the predicate in the above case and reframe the proposition as 'John is 6''. If now the proposition if true, it is true irrespective of contexts, if it is false, it is so irrespective of contexts. Such a proposition is strictly subject to the principle of Bivalence (PB) and LEM.

What Sen means by 'Proposition' is not the proposition of modern logic which is a truth-claim such that if the claim obtains, the proposition becomes true, if not, the proposition becomes false. There is no third alternative. Russell has very aptly brought out the main features of proposition thus :

.... of any two propositions there must be one which implies the other, that false propositions imply all propositions, and true propositions are implied by all propositions.[9]

He also adds :

Every proposition implies itself, and whatever is not a proposition implies nothing.[10]

Sen's scheme of propositions does not fit into the idea of propositions adopted by modern formal logic. So what is true of his propositions have hardly any bearing on the propositions of modern formal logic.

NOTES

1. Deb. A, : *Logical Studies*, Anstup, Calcutta, 2000 Pp. 26-27.

2. Deb. A, : *Ibid*, P. 14.

3. Deb. A, : *Ibid*, P. 69.

4. Deb. A, : *Ibid*, P. 14.

5. Sen. A, : A reply to 'Apology for Bivalence' in *IPQ - Vol. XXVIII*, No. 4, Oct - 2001, P. 507.

6. Sen. A, : *Ibid*, P. 509.

7. Sen. A, : *Ibid*, P. 510.

8. Strawson, P.F. : *Introduction to Logical Theory*, Methuen, 1952 P. 220.

9. Russell, B. : *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) P. 15.

10. Russell, B. *Ibid*, P. 15.

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ECOFEMINISM

Arpana Dhar Das

The term 'ecofeminism' is a twin of both ecology (nature) and feminine (women) that deserves much attention of modern environmentalists. The term 'ecofeminism' was first introduced by Francoise D'Eaubonne[1] in 1974 in a very specific sense which predominantly reconceived feminist principles and tried to contstruct an environmental ethics by taking into account possible connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature. This movement, in fact, gained impetus in the recent decades in the form of innumerable protests against the burning problem of environmental devastation. The interconnectedness between women and nature has persisted throughout history and culture and any feminist theory or environmental ethics which fails to include this twin subjugation of women and nature 'is at best incomplete and at worst simply inadequate.'[2]

According to prominent ecofeminists, oppression and exploitation of women prevailing in patriarchal society is very much similar to the domination and exploitation of nature by men. Just as the domination of women by men is detrimental to the society, at least morally, likewise the domination of nature is detrimental to the whole biotic community. Understanding ecofeminism, i.e. the link between women and nature, helps one to comprehend the value, dignity and basic necessities of all forms of life within the biotic community. Ecofeminism, a feminine movement, strives to rule out the twin domination and exploitation of women and nature. It helps one to develop a caring, loving and sympathetic attitude towards all life forms thereby cultivating the ground for peaceful, mutual co-existence of men with nature and women. So the objective of ecofeminism is to lay bare the dignity of life of all species, humans as well as non-humans, animate

as well as inanimate. The aim of this paper is to focus on, at first, the nature of a feminist ethics and then pass on to show in what senses ecofeminism gives rise to feminist and environmental ethics. In the concluding section we propose to investigate how far and in what sense the term ecofeminism will be legitimatised in the context of present environmental ethics.

The Nature and Objective of Feminist Ethics

Feminist's movement is, in fact, a totalitarian movement undertaken by women of all sects to eliminate or put an end to the continued and systematic domination and subjugation of women by men. Amongst all forms of domination, sexist oppression, which is morally unacceptable in all its forms, is vehemently protested by the different feminist groups. The other objectives of the feminine movement are disappearance of the salaried class (beyond equal salaries) disappearance of competitive hierarchies and irreversible end of the male society. The feminists' aim is to put an end to the male domination of the society and thereby remake the planet, which according to them is in danger of dying. Alternatively, it can be said that the chief motto of the feminist movement is to "snatch the car's steering wheel from the hands of male society ......"[3] Moreover, searching for firewood, carrying water and providing minimum sustenance for the family constitutes a women's primary responsibility and on account of her participation in these activities she fails to take part in decision making, income producing or high status positions engaged by men. Therefore, most of the feminist issues depend largely on the historical and material condition of women's lives. The two immediate problems imperiling mankind are overpopulation and destruction of natural resources, the outcome of male hierarchy or patriarchy and domination. The power of reproduction and their ability to sow the earth as they do women are the prime causes behind this menace.

Fifty centuries ago, women enjoyed monopoly in agriculture and men believed that women were impregnated by God. But with the discovery of their dual power. i.e., agricultural and procreational, men seized control of the soil (fertility) and women's womb (fecundity). In fact the over-exploitation of the environment. The wisest solution to this grave problem is the destruction of the two by men had resulted in over-population and the destruction of male power by women in the form of mass totalitarian

movement.

From the above observation it is clear that environmental degradation and exploitation are feminist issues and a proper understanding of the aforesaid issue paves the way for a better understanding of female oppression. Environmental devastation, the outcome of advanced science and technology in the form of industrialization, commercialization of agriculture and massive deforestation deprived women of their rights. Rampant felling of trees for commercialization of agriculture, i.e., cultivation of monoculture species has led to destruction of virgin forest, thereby destabilizing women's ability to maintain subsistence household. Development in science and technology, in fact, "destroyed women's productivity both by removing land, water and forests from their management and control as well as through the ecological destruction of soil, water, and vegetation systems so that nature's productivity and renewability were impaired."[4] In trying to find out an intimate connection between the devastation of nature and oppression of women, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva write, "We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concern. It is the same masculinist mentality which would deny us our own bodies and our own sexuality and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way."[5]

Many of the ecological disasters like the leakage of methyle isocynide gas from union carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal on the night of 2-3 December, 1984 and the consequent death of 3,000 people provoked the female force to protest against the harmful consequences of the so called advanced technology undertaken by the masculine force. According to the feminist, it was a war against nature and therefore against women. Today's women have realized that the recent development in biotechnology, genetic engineering and reproductive technology whose paradigm is essentially patriarchal are all against the regenerative and reproductive capacities of nature and women in particular. Degradation of environment which is equalized with the subjugation of women is thus the outcome of patriarchy or masculine domination of the society. Feminists thus "understand that the liberation of women can not be achieved in isolation, but only as a part of the larger struggle for the preservation of life on the

planet."[6]

Are Feminist issues Conceptual ?

So far we have outlined and examined the nature and objective of feminist issues and also discussed how they are akin to ecological issues. The question which now arises is : Are feminist issues conceptual ? In fact the parallelism between the domination of women and the domination of the nature is conceptual and the extension of feminism towards ecofeminism is also conceptual. It is now necessary to clarify the term 'conceptual framework'. The term 'conceptual framework' is understood as 'a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes and assumption which shape and reflect how one views oneself and one's world. It is supposed to be a socially constructed lens through which we perceive ourselves and others.'[7]

As far as feminist issues are concerned the term 'conceptual framework' can be classified into two types; namely, oppressive and patriarchal. The oppressive conceptual framework explains, maintains and justifies the relationship of domination and subjugation among species of the biotic community. On the contrary, patriarchal conceptual framework justifies, maintains and explains domination of women by men. Feminist issues are more centered round the patriarchal form of domination. But both forms of oppression are basic concerns of environmental philosophy and environmental ethics as they are both detrimental to the society and the the evironment at large.

Distinctive features of oppressive conceptual framework :

There we have some distinctive features of oppressive conceptual framework. These are as follows :

(1) Value hierarchial thinking : Value hierarchial thinking or 'up' and 'down' thinking which confers value, status and prestige on what is 'up' than what is 'down'. For example, human beings enjoy higher value and status than the other species of the biotic community. Arguably, human beings are morally allowed to oppress or subjugate other species.

(2) Value dualism : The second distinctive feature of oppressive conceptual framework is 'value dualism' which admit disjunctive pairs in which the disjuncts are seen as oppositional rather than complementary and exclusive rather than inclusive. Accordingly, one disjunct enjoys superiority over the other. If human beings, e.g., are classified into male

and female, i.e., the disjunctive pair, value dualism bestows higher value and status to male who are similarized with 'mind' and 'reason' than to female identified as 'body' and 'emotion'.

(3) Logic of domination : The third and the most distinctive feature of oppressive conceptual framework in the logic of domination that justifies subordination or domination of one species by other species. The logic of domination, however, is not just a logical structure, it does involve a substantive value system. Justification of domination is based on some alleged characteristic possessed by the species. For example, in case of human beings, the alleged characteristic of the male is rationality and therefore his domination over the female, lacking this special alleged characteristic, i,e., rationality, is absolutely justified. The chief arguments which justify the logic of domination are as follows :

(A1) Human beings possess the capacity to consciously transform the community in which they live, but non- human nature like plants and rock, however, lack this capacity.

(A2) Whatever possess the capacity of radically changing its community is morally considered to be superior to whatever lack this capacity.

(A3) Thus, human beings are morally superior to non-human nature like plants and rocks.

(A4) For any x and y, if x is morally superior to y, then x is morally justified in subordinating y.

(A5) Thus, it can be concluded that human subordination of non-human nature like rocks and plants is morally justified.

Argument (A4) is significantly relevant to the ecofeminst's discussion of oppression and subordination. According to them the oppressive conceptual framework, the twin domination of nature and women, is essentially a patriarchal one which sanctions the following argument :

(B1) Women are identified with 'nature' and the realm of the physical; men are identified with the 'human' and the realm of the mental.

(B2) Whatever is identified with the nature and the realm of the physical is inferior (below to whatever is identified with the 'human' and the realm of the mental.

(B3) Thus women are inferior (below) to men or conversely, men are superior (up) to women.

(B4) For any x and y, if x is superior to y, then x is justified in subordinating y.

(B5) Thus, men are justified in subordinating women.

Ecofeminist's reaction to the above arguments :

The argument stated above is really patriachal in nature as it admits and justifies the systematic domination and subordination of women by men. Ecofeminists are of the opinion that all the three distinctive features of oppressive conceptual framework are embedded within argument (B5). The notion of value hierarchial thinking is found in (B2) and the logic of domination is included in (B4). Though both oppressive conceptual framework, i.e., argument (A1)-(A5) and patriarchy, i.e., argument (B1)-(B5) have functioned historically, all ecofeminists have claimed that both are not tenable.

The concept of patriarchy, according to ecofeminists, has its root in western philosophical and intellectual tradition. The ecofeminists who virtually oppose the concept of domination and subjugation, which may be either oppressive or patriarchal, find that argument (B1) and (B2) are problematic since the twin domination of nature and women have been justified historically in a patriarchal conceqtual framework. (B1) and (B2) are problematic precisely because of the way they have functioned historically in a patriarchal conceptual framework and culture to sanction dominations of women and nature. We have already discussed vividly that all feminists oppose patriarchy, i.e., B5. therefore, all feminists including ecofeminists must oppose at least the logic of domination, i.e., B4 on which the whole argument of domination of women and nature by men hinges. They deny arguments B1, B2, and B3 which place men, i.e., symbolized or categorized as human 'up' and women, symbolized as nature 'down' on the basis of some alleged differences making men superior to women and thereby justify subordination of women by men. Moreover, the domination of women by men should not be justified on the basis of commonness possessed by all women. It means that women should not be apprehended in terms of 'sui-generis', i.e., there is no one women's voice, no women's simpliciter. Modern concept of feminism should be understood

in terms of gender, class, race, age, affectional orientation, marital status and so forth. The concept of feminism is based on solidarity movement, but in no sense is to justified on the basis of monolithic experience. In other words, it can be said that modern feminism should be interpreted not on the basis of the slogan "unity among diversity", but on the basis of "family resemblance" as proposed by later Wittgenstein. The greatest burden of modern patriarchism is that it tries to understand modern feminism not in terms of solidarity but in terms of unity.

Key sources of patriarchism :

1) **Development :** Scientific development is a deep concern for ecofeminists. Post colonial development, commercialization of economy and creation of surplus and profits have to be undertaken as it fulfils the needs and desires of modern men. This form of development seems to bring about progress on one hand, but in reality it brings about maldevelopment that worsen or introduce patriarchal practise of dominating women and nature. Such development schemes displace people living sustainably, create poverty, induce destruction to the environment and crumble the regenerative capacity of the ecosystem. The only rational solution to the grave problem is to recover the feminine principle through an attitude of care and spirituality. In fact, the notion of development is based on exploitation and exclusion of women, degradation of nature and erosion of their cultures. Thus, ecofeminists are concerned about, not only for the fact that women take inadequate and insufficient participation in development programs, but also for the fact that they bear the costs without deserving the benefits.

The privatization of land for the generation of revenue, deprived women of their traditional land use rights. Cultivation of commercial crops like tea, cotton, jute etc., instead of food crops created enormous burden on the women folk since they were left with meager resources to feed their children, the aged and the infirm, as men were forced to work as labourers by the so called modern colonisers. This, in fact, reduced women's participation in income and employment, increased their work load and worsened their health, nutritional and educational standards. Commersialisation of agriculture crushed women's productivity on one hand by taking away land, water and forest from their management, and on the other nature's productivity and regenerative capacity were impaired through

destruction of soil, water and vegetation systems. Different forms of gender oppression and patriarchy have been aggravated through the project of development. Since passivity is the very nature of women and nature, patriarchy in terms of development denies activity of life. Nature is supposed to be unproductive and hence requires the help of scientific technology to become productive. Likewise, women, tribals and peasants similarised to nature are also passive and unproductive since their productive efforts can create economic growth only when mediated by technologies for commodity production. A clear source of water cannot be considered as a resource unless a dam is constructed with the help of modern technology to supply water for agriculture, electricity and other useful purposes. Women using the water of the river to satisfy the need of the family are not involved in productive activity. Similarly, virgin forests remain unproductive unless felled and transformed into agricultural fields for production of monoculture species. Vandana Shiva outlines the direction of development in the following manners. She says, "Development thus is equivalent to maldevelopment, a development bereft of the feminine, the conservation, the ecological principle. The neglect of nature's work in renewing herself, and women's work in producing sustenance in the form of basic, vital needs is an essential part of the paradigm of maldevelopment, which sees all work that does not produce profits and capital as non or productive work."[8]

Modernization :

Modernization is another notion of patriarchy and maldevelopment. Modernization through industrialization, commercialization and advancement in science and technology invites maldevelopment and patriarchal domination of nature and women in reality. Maldevelopment defies the integrity, harmony and interconnectedness among the different species of the biotic community, which thereby generates exploitation, inequality, injustice and violence. Observing the helpless conditions of women and nature, Mahatma Gandhi once said, "There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but for some people's greed." Therefore, maldevelopment in the name of modernization ruptures the harmony and intergrity between the masculine and the feminine. It places men above nature and women thereby aggravating domination of the so-called passive women and nature by the so-called active men. From being the creators and sustainers of life, women and nature are reduced to 'passive object' or 'resources' in the fragmented

antilife model of maldevelopment.

Development or progress, which actually indicates maldevelopment or partiarchy is usually called 'economy growth' what is measured in terms of Gross National Product (GNP). However, measurement of economic growth of a country in terms of GNP does not present a true picture since it does not encompass the detrimental hidden costs created due to ecological and environment degradation, costs that are irreversible and heavier for women. Modern economic growth coins through commodity production with the of advanced technology that impairs the potentiality of nature and women to produce life and goods and services for basic needs. Production of more goods creates more cash, but reduces nature's life through environmental devastation. Thus, development that actually means maldevelopment devalued women first as their work is equated with nature's process, work which satisfies the basic needs and ensures sustenance in general. Therefore, in order to save the environment from devastation, it is high time to recover the feminine principle as the basis for development. Thus, feminism deserves the revival of women and ecofeminism equally deserves the revival of women and nature. In this sense we can say that the revival of feminism means the revival of ecology of Prakriti, the source of all life. The revival of feminine principle involves the transformation of the patriarchal foundation of maldevelopment which can come through redefinition of growth and productivity as categories linked to the production of life.

Before ending this section, let us briefly make a correlation between social ecology and ecofeminism. Social ecology is an approach to ecological and environmental issues that generally deals with the work of one person, whereas ecofeminsim is concerned about environmental issue that reflect the diversity amongst different feminist thinkers as a general prescriptive on ecological issues. These two perspectives, i.e., social ecology and feminism have much in common as each perceives environmental degradation related to social problems of control and dominance. Both the studies are concerned about environmental crisis whose causes are deeply rooted within the society. Both agree that the domination and subjugation of nature arises from the social pattern of hierarchy and patriarchy that dictates domination of women by men. The question then arises : What is a society ? The humans themselves for serving their own ends, in fact,

create society. The various social practices entail domination and oppression of one group over another. The benefit of the former encourages domination of all forms including domination over nature by men that is the root cause of various ecological and environmental problems. In order to grasp fully the crisis of the environment one needs to understand the general patterns of human domination by other humans. According to the famous feminist Karren J. Warren there exists historical, empirical, conceptual, theoretical, symbolic and experimental connections between the domination of women and nature which should be properly understood and not overlooked or else the process of domination over both nature and women by the masculine force will continue which essentially results in continuous ecological devastion. Thus, according to the ecofeminists, the social pattern of dominance, hierarchy and patriarchy should be halted to put an end to environmental crisis.

Concluding remarks :

So far we have outlined and examined the nature and objective of ecofeminism and thereby have established the interconnectedness between women and nature. The philosophical and environmental significance of the interconnectedness between the domination of women and nature can be clearly visualised if one tries to understand the views of different feminist groups, viz., liberal feminists, Marxist feminists, social and radical feminists who oppose the logic of domination and oppression of women and nature by men. The liberal feminists are of the opinion that there is no relevant difference between men and women, they possess the same free and rational nature as they are all human. Hence any unequal treatment to women in the form of oppression and subjugation is morally unjust. Marxist feminists opine that women engaged in day long domestic service are deprived of their properly rights of ownership over home and hence subjugated by men. Hence, women's participation in productive labour is the only way towards the liberation of women. Social feminists view that the oppresssion of women as an outcome of certain social patterns, customs and traditions. Therefore, denial of such traditions and patterns can bring about liberation of women. Radical feminists conceive that the real basis of women's oppression is the biological and sexual differences between men and women. So some radical feminists conceive that women can escape oppression only when these traditional gender roles are abolished.

Considerable work has been done on this branch of radical feminism in the form of 'cultural ecofeminism' establishing the fact that there are particular women ways of understanding and conceiving the world. Women are compared to nature and therefore oppressed like nature. Cultural ecofeminists thus try to remedy ecological and other problems through the creation of an alternative women's culture based on revaluing, celebrating and defending what patriarchy has devalued, including the feminine non-human nature, the body and the emotion. It appears clear that in the eyes of feminists the oppression and subjugation of women and nature by men is ethically unjust and morally intolerable. Thus, ecofeminism is supposed to be a revolt against patriatchy, which invites environmental crisis by employing scientific development that directly or indirectly tends to extinct women and nature.

Does it make sense to say that scientific development lack practical utility? Certainly not. Scientific upliftment of nation is highly essential for the fulfilment of the needs and desires of the growing population. None can deny this. Ecofeminists, like all other people accept scientific and technological development, but disgree with the line of approach under taken by modern man. Thus, there always underlies an apparent dilemma that can be formulated in the following manner.

If scientific development is accepted, the domination and oppression of women and nature seems inevitable and if scientific development is not accepted, then the needs and requirements of the growing population cannot be fulfilled.

Either scientific development is accepted of is not accepted.

Therefore, either the domination and oppression of nature by men seems inevitable or the needs and requirements of the growing population cannot be fulfilled.

The main objective of scientific and technological development is to satisfy the requirements of the ever growing population. But if such development ignores the dignity of nature and women, it will bring about ecological and environmental crisis. Hence, ecofeminism welcomes development, but not the form of development which brings down the dignity of nature and women generating maldevelopment in reality. According to

them, a development which ensures respect for women and nature and encourages mutual co-operation and co-existence of men with nature should be undertaken so the question, how we ought to develop is more pertinent to the ecofeminists than the question how we can develop ? If the question, how we can develop is given much importance then more emphasis is laid on the process of development based on patriarchy. There is no question of doubt that any form of scientific upliftment is the outcome of 'rational decision' taken by the decision making body in the form of a law or policy. As far as policy is concerned there is nothing wrong in implementing scientific development But the term 'rational decision' must be evaluated in terms of instrumental and non-instrumental value, i.e., in terms of intrinsic and non-intrinsic value. Scientific upliftment based on partiarchy gives more significance to instrumental value, whereas it completely ignores the relevance of intrinsic value. Such a view is popularly known as 'anthropocentrism'. Any development programme which is anthropocentric in nature incorporates instrumental value and rejects non-instrumental value. The ecofeminists raise objection or protest against this view of scientific development. They, however, endorse scientific development which incorporates non-anthropocentrism and honours or dignifies non-instrumental or intrinsic value. This means ecofeminism aims to restore the dignity of intrinsic value which is the outcome of non-anthropocentrism. Thus we can say that ecofeminism endorses scientific development in the form of the question : how we ought to develop ? Any development programme that incorporates intrinsic value, the dignity of all life forms of the biotic community is preserved and protected. The objective of ecofeminism, therefore, is to lay bare the dignity of all species. Since all species contribute equally towards maintenance of a proper biotic level, each species should deserve the same dignity of life. In this regard ecofeminism is supposed to be a totalitarian approach that tries to bring about scientific development through the preservation and protection of dignity of all life forms of the biotic community. Ecofeminism is thus a revolt against maldevelopment which brings about environmental degradation; a protest against any form of scientific development which incorporates only instrumental value by rejective or ignoring intrinsic value which means to neglect the dignity of all species that contribute a lot, though passively, towards the betterment of mankind. Development of a nation should not be measured in terms of

economic productivity.

In the process of modern development women and nature are considered to be economically unproductive and are therefore devalued. According to ecofeminists, a women's productivity or nature's productive capacity should be measured in terms of their sharing, caring, and loving attitude towards the society. This attitude of love and care, which is often termed as an 'ethics of care' is, in fact, the key to proper understanding of environmental ethics in general and ecofeminism in particular. Proper development of the nation, according to the ecofeminists, can come through an attitude of love and care towards nature and women that will also lead to restoration of intrinsic value.

I think that ecological crises can be solved by exploring the interconnectedness between women and nature an ecological ethics based on care and relationship. An ethics of care commences with the picturization of a moral universe where the attitude of care, co-operation and relation ship replaces conflict, crisis and collision. In the so called moral universe the abstract principles of individual autonomy, rights and duties, justice, rules and laws are devalued and the feminine qualities of friendship and mothering are esteemed. According to many feminists and ecofeminists, the feminine aspect of care, friendship and cordiality and co-operation is much more natural and genuine than the principles associated with maldevelopment. In fact, the mother-child relationship of care which is essentially feminine is highly significant within the moral universe. This special caliber of women brings them nearer to nature which was thought to be the basis of masculine oppression over women and nature. The cultural feminists of today build on this identification of women as a symbol of love and care as a basis for a benevolent relationship between humans and nature. An ethics of virtue replaces the abstract and general principles in this moral universe. In this universe the good of the moral person, i.e., the loving mother whose actions are guided by morality and virtue is highly valued. Ecofeminists believe that this valuation of the feminine principle of love and affection will help the human in general to develop an attitude of care towards nature.

An ecofeminist perspective of both women and nature involves a shift in attitude from arrogant perception to loving perception of the non-human world. If one perceives the non-human world with a loving eye

then one recognizes the distinction between the self and the other, between the human and the non-human and thereby shows an attitude of respect and love for the dissimilar. Karen says, "Loving perception of the non-human natural world is an attempt to understand what it means for humans to care about the non-human world, a world acknowledged as being independent, different, perhaps even indifferent to humans." This remark of Karen further recalls the remark of Leopold's injunction that we must first come to love, respect and admire the land before applying the more abstract principles of the land ethics.

We also think that the concept of women's spirituality is another area through which a bond between women and nature can be detected. The ecological relevance of this emphasis on spirituality actually hinges on the re-discovery of the sameness of life where life on earth can be protected only if people begin to perceive all life forms as sacred. Here, the realization of God is embedded in women's spirituality movement where God is seen as the creator of nature. Thus, one can identify women and nature only with the divine. Some ecofeminists even maintain the view that God is immanent in nature and thereby come to realize the natural world as the creation of divine. Accordingly, respect towards earth and nature is similar to respect for the divine. This means that loving earth is a spiritual as well as ecological responsibility of man. That is why, it has been rightly pointed out by some ecofeminists that celebration Mother Nature becomes the way for women's spirituality to rejoice in the sacredness of women and nature. Women's spirituality, however, is not detached from the material world; it is the life force in everything and in every human being. Spirituality is the connecting force of every species According to Shiva and Mies, women's spirituality is akin to women' sensuality, sexual energy that links them with every other life form. It abolishes the opposition between spirit and matter, transcendence and immanence, life and spirit, which is embedded in our sensuous experience. Spirituality of women is understood as love without which no other life can blossom. It is a magic, but not a religion which subsists in everything. The ecological relevance of women's spirituality underlies in the discovery of the sacredness of life that stand with the motto that life on earth can be protected only if people come to realize all lie forms as sacred in everyday life. Thus we can say that realizing the concepts of care, love and spirituality are the ways of understanding

ecofeminism through which the dignity of all species of the whole biotic community can be preserved and valued. Feminine principle gives rise to a redefiniton of life that is linked to ecological sustainability.

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MIND, MODULARITY AND EVOLUTION

R. M. SINGH

The recent philosophy of mind and cognitive science literature inspired by a new zeal for spinning out grand synthesis in the biological sciences appears to be moving in a direction that is quite akin to the much discredited unity of science movement. Those familiar with the recent outpourings on the subject cannot but be stuck by the optimism that this literature exudes by promising "a conceptually integrated theory" (Cosmides. Tooby & Barkow 1992:4)[1]. Utilising insights from classical computational theory, modularity of mind approach, and relatively more recent developments in Neo-Darwinian evolutionary psychology in characteristically new and ingenious ways, New Synthesis Nativism (hereafter NSN) has all the potential of graduating to be the new orthodoxy of the times[2]. The new ideology is in fact so packaged and marketed that it leaves no room for doubting that there remain any big problems or mysteries lacking scientific explanation. This is as true whether your problems are aesthetic, cultural, economic, moral, political, psychological, or anything else that you can imagine. So unless you have been wise enough to have mortgaged your 'soul' to some time tested sceptic formula, there is every chance of being swept away by the new ideology. If you insist on sampling the pudding, then make your pick.

For the scientifically minded, NSN has on offer solutions to problems as diverse as : What is the nature of human mind ? Does the notion of computation capture the essence of how our minds work ? Are human minds nothing but thinking machines ? Is there any difference between the 'mind' of a robot and that of an intelligent scientist ? Why human minds are like a noisy parliament in which every one competes with others to be heard ? Is knowledge possible ? What causes visual illusions ? Is there

anything like a free will ? Why do most of us believe in the immortality of soul ? Why are people religious despite living in an age of science ? What is the cause of our likes and dislikes ? Is it more beneficial to have one's own children or will having hordes of nieces and nephews would prove to be a better investment strategy ? Why parents invest in their children but leave their own old and helpless parents to die in charity homes ? What causes human emotions ? What is love ? What is the psychology of humour and friendship ? What is beauty ? Why men are adulterous and run after women of good complexion and fluffy hair, but chain their wives with chastity belts ? Why do some societies practice female infanticide and value male offspring ? Why do people favour their kith and kin and indulge in nepotism ? What lies behind violence in society ? What kind of family values one should adhere to ? If that is not already a plate full, then NSN can also tell you about 'meaning of life.'

That of late the optimism generated by NSN is not being much appreciated can perhaps be gauged by the fact that even scholars from within the modularity fold have started raising their voice of dissent (Fodor 1998 & 2000). In what follows, I aim to assess the scope and limits of ideas about the nature of mind that NSN promotes and offer a re-examination of at least some of the claims that have come to grip popular imagination. Keeping in view the extreme ways in which the advocates of NSN are prone to reacting to their rivals' ideas as well as their propensity to invoke the magical wand of maturational factors for explaining everything without providing any details of how such factors work to achieve their desired results. I have resisted myself from utilising ideas and insights from other perspectives in my assessment though some new approaches have made significant progress by addressing at least some of the issues discussed here[3]. Also, since Fodor happens to be one of the most influential and leading nativist thinker responsible for popularising the idea of modularity of mind. I have chiefly concentrated on his ideas for demonstrating the problematic nature of many of the claims made by NSN. In a way, I consider the present essay to be a small step towards taming at least some of the undesired enthusiasm generated by NSN. Before dwelling on how NSN thesis as espoused by, among others, Pinker (1998)[4], Plotkin (1997), Cosmides and Tooby (1992 & 1994). Dworkin (1996), and Sperber (1994) is not the right kind of description of how our minds work, it may be

worthwhile to first briefly look at the modularity of mind thesis[5]. This may also help us assess better the extent to which many of the NSN claims are problematic in nature.

Mind and Modularity

The idea that mind is modular in nature was first introduced by Fodor in his *Modularity of the Mind* (1983, hereafter referred to as MOM)[6]. In MOM, Foder looks at the mind to be made up of modules and non-modular central system[7]. Both of these are characterised by the distinct roles marked for each one of them. While modules as input systems perform the task of transforming the information to which they are privy into a format comprehensible to the central system, central systems are responsible for undertaking large scale searches necessary for determining the relevance of current computations and responsible for "fixation of belief) (MOM 112)[8]. "[T]hey are the means whereby subject's knowledge of the world is applied to input interpretation" (Rosenthal 1991, 51). But let us first have a look at the distinguishing features of modules. These are :

i) They are *domain specific*. This means that modules operate only within their proprietary domain. The domain specificity has to do "with the range of questions for which a device provides answers" (MOM, 103). That is, modules operate only on inputs that fall within a specified range. We can, for example, have input systems that are sensitive only to the structural features of sentences and would accordingly not respond to stimuli that do not satisfy this condition (MOM, 47 f.)

ii) They *operate mandatorily*. That is, given their domain specific input they will definitely provide an output. The domain specific inputs in a way trigger them into action automatically. In this sense they are like reflexes. If they were not to so function then there is no way that the transducer outputs can reach the central processes responsible for integration of outputs of different modules and fixation of beliefs. (MOM, 52-54).

iii) They permit only *limited access to computed representations* as the information /input available to module is proprietary and cannot be made available to the subject. This means that their operations are relatively *inaccessible* to central system in the sense that less

the distance of representations from transducer outputs greater their inaccessibility to central systems. Expressed otherwise, we can say that while the lowest level representations are least accessible to central systems, the representations most distanced from transducer outputs are likely to be more accessible. That is, while processing is from bottom up, access is from top down (MOM, 56)[9].

iv) They are *fast*. This feature is to some extent derived from their mandatory nature (MOM, 61).

v) They are *informationally encapsulated*. This feature is treated by Fodor to be the most salient feature of modules (MOM, 83) and refers to "the range of information that the device consults in deciding what answers to provide." (MOM, 103). It also means that the proprietary information of a module can neither be made available to other modules nor can it be shared with central systems. This is what is meant by the assertion that the flow between modules and nonmodularised systems is cognitively unpenetrable, i.e. instructionally unchangeable[10]. This important aspect of modules is best illustrated by the "persistence of perceptual illusions even when one is aware that they're illusions" (Fodor 1998 : 155). The Muller Lyre illusion as well as the changing size of the moon when it moves upwards from the horizon are the obvious examples. However hard we may try to convince ourselves about the illusory nature of such perceptions, our perceptual mechanisms are so wired that they continue to provide their usual outputs and are in no way affected by our beliefs to the contrary. That, despite persistence of such illusions we don't believe in them is very revealing about the existence of non-modular mechanisms (i.e., the central systems) responsible for fixation of belief. By so disregarding the output of a module, the central systems are in a way executing the important task of helping us arrive at right decisions for guiding our actions. Persistence of many perceptual illusions is thus very revealing about the existence of modules and the important role that non-modular systems play in our dealings with the world[11].

vi) They have *shallow outputs* (MOM, 86). This seems to follow the limited nature of their operating domain.

vii) They are *neurologically hardwired* in the sense that they a have characteristically fixed neural architecture (MOM, 98).

viii) They *exhibit characteristic and specific breakdown patterns* as evidenced from different, whether accidental or degenerative, pathological conditions and syndromes (MOM, 99).

ix) They are *innately specified* in the sense of information available at their disposal (MOM, 100).

As opposed to modules, the most salient feature of the central systems is their "cognitive penetrability" (MOM, 83). The central systems are also functionally distinct from modules. However, as opposed to modules "there are no content-specific central processes for which correspondingly specific neural structures have been identified" (MOM, 119)[12]. Also, they "do not communicate with the world *directly*" (Rosenthal 1991, 51). They can have access to the sensory input solely via the outputs of modules. In the context of controversies surrounding NSN's approriation of modularity thesis, it is important to note that Fodor's version of modularity of mind as outlined above also admits of degrees of modularity (MOM, 37). In fact, Fodor has nowhere argued that mind is entirely modular in nature[13]. What he actually suggests is that, for the time being, it is a wise research strategy to concentrate on the modular aspects alone as it is in this domain that one's labour is likely to be best rewarded. It is also possible that we do not share his pessimistic belief that we have no idea of what the non-modular aspects of mind are like. But this is an empirical question that can be settled by having a look at the actual data. However, what should be clear from this brief summary of his ideas is that though Fodor believes that mind is modular in many respects, he is also equally forceful in emphasising that some of the most important and interesting aspects of it are non-modular in character. This brings us to the trouble of NSN.

Though there is no text book definition of New Synthesis Nativism, it is not unsafe to suppose that NSN results from combining of Turing's ideas on computation (Turing 1950) with rationalist psychology (i.e. psychological nativism) and neo-Darwinist accounts of evolution (Fodor 2000:2. Hereinafter MDW) . Without being too concerned for the time being with the question of viability of such a grand synthesis, let us first focus on what is new to NSN.

Cognitive Processes as Computations

The first key idea that NSN appropriates is the claim that cognitive processes are computational in nature. As Pinker, for example, remarks: "beliefs and desires are *information,* incarnated as configurations of symbols" (1998:25)[14]. Computations, as we may recall in the classical sense of Turing, are mechanical operations that are syntactically driven" (MDW, 4; MOM 4)[15]. This way of looking at computations had a revolutionary impact because Turing provided us with the idea of "how to make a computing machine that will recognise any argument that is valid in virtue of its syntax" (MDW, 13). Now, if we try to understand the NSN idea that cognitive processes are computations in the context of Turing's rendering of what computations are all about, then "a mental process, qua computation, is a formal operation on syntacticaly structured mental representations" (MDW, 11). Consequently, cognitive processes would be the kind of operations that Turing machines can perform. This is in so far as the first theoretical pillar of NSN is concerned. Let us look at the others as well.

The second theoretical trend that NSN incorporates, as mentioned above, is rationalist psychology. The chief idea of rationalist psychology relevant for consideration in the present context is that beliefs, desires, thoughts, and the like (that is, "propositional attitudes") have logical forms and that the latter are determinants of the causal role that the former and the latter are determinants of the causal role that the former are capable of having in mental processes (MDW, 14). Conjoining rationalist psychology with Turing's ideas gives us a computational theory of Mind (hereinafterCTM) according to which :

"i) Thoughts have their causal roles in virtue of .... their logical form.

ii) The logical form of a thought supervenes on the syntactic form of the corresponding mental representation.

iii) Mental processes are .... computations.... and they are reliably truth preserving in indefinitely many cases (MDW, 18-19).

However, such a rendering of mental precess has many troublesome consequences. First and foremost let us look at the idea of syntactic properties of representations. These properties are very peculiar in the

sense that, on the one hand, they are local features of representations in the sense of being determined "entirely by what parts a representation has and how these parts are arranged", and, on the other hand, they determine the relation of a representation with other representations (MDW, 20). It is this peculiarity of the syntax of representations that seems to create trouble for the NSN theorists. Fodor suggests that there are two ways in which we can look at syntax. Firstly, it is natural for us to think of syntax as one of the essential properties of representations. From this follows what Fodor terms as Principle E. That is, "Only essential properties of a mental representation can determine its causal role in a mental life" (MDW, 24). A CTM along with Principle E-E(CTM)- would mean that mental processes are sensitive to *only* syntactic properties of representations because of their being computations. The essential properties by their very nature not being context-sensitive (after all that is how we usually make sense of 'the essences'), E(CTM) would entail that mental processes are not context-sensitive. That is, the context of mental processes is not one of their determinants at least in so far as their computational role is concerned. Such a conclusion is, however, problematic because mental processes do in fact have context-dependent determinants. For example, certain properties of thoughts are sensitive to the belief system they're embedded in. If this is indeed the case, then "the determinants of the computational role of a mental representation shifts from context to context" (MDW, 28). This means that there are at least some situations where "the computational role of a mental representation is not determined by its syntax" (MDW, 28). But this can have extremely disastrous consequences for the believers of NSN for it entails that at least some mental processes are not computations.

Now, as we all know, one way out of such troublesome situations is that we relax the conditions of our theory in question to accommodate the troublesome cases. Since giving up the claim that thinking is computational in nature is definitely too big a sacrifice to make, Fodor suggests that instead of giving up the entire theory there is no harm in first re-examining the claim that "the causal role of a mental representation is syntactically determined" and see whether the theory can be saved at least in some form (MDW, 28). Doing this gives us the other alternative view of making sense of syntax, what Fodor calls Minimal computational theory of Mind -

M(CTM). According to M(CTM) then, "The role of a mental representation in cognitive process supervenes on some syntactic facts or other" (MDW, 29). As regards the question of examining how well this much diluted version works, we may recall that one of the main features of computation is that they require access to constituent structure of representations for their operations to be possible. It is because of their accessibility to constituent structure that we also tend to suppose that computations have access to the syntax of the representation in question. This is where the old problem seems to resurface as representations are not only, as remarked above, sensitive to their constituent structure but also to their relation with other representations. But this cannot mean the end of the road for CTM. We can also adopt those tried and tested tricks of our friends in computer science who face such problems on every day basis. If such strategies have done wonders for them, there appears no harm in trying them out in our current difficult situation. There is no reason for anyone to grudge if we utilise tools tested by others for tackling our difficulties. It is all in the inter-disciplinary spirit and we need not suffer from any qualms of conscience if such tricks work for us as well. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to. Here is why it doesn't.

For those in the business of computing, the problem is tackled by adopting the technique of adding the relation(s) that the representation in question has with other representations but is not contained within the representation as its constituent part in conjunction with the representation. That is, if Rep(q) is the representation in question and it has a relation Rel(q) with other representations without Rel(q) being contained in Rep(q) as its constituent, then we replace Rep(q) by Rep(q) & Rel(q). This is done to allow the computing mechanism to get access to relation(s) that the representation in question has with other representations but is not captured by representation's constituent structure. That is, it allows access to features left out of the syntax. Such an exercise, at least in principle, facilitiates incorporation of those features of a theory, context, or the belief system in which the representation is embedded within the scope of computaions. This stragtegy works very well in so far as the background assumptions are few. That is, in such situations the task is manageable. But when assumptions are many with complicated relations between them, such quick fix solutions do not work even within otherwise neatly drawn

problem space that researchers in computer science confront on a day to day basis. This strategy doesn't always work because it leads to massive regression. There is regression because all background assumptions or epistemological commitments have to be treated as an object of computation. The regression will either have no end or will stop only when we have incorporated all assumptions of the theory, context, or the belief system in question. As Rosenthal remarks, "How am I to determine those and only those domains of knowledge that are sufficient to cope with the present circumstances" (1991,49)? A purely syntactically driven computing device has no way of figuring this out. It is not without reason that researchers working on problems in Artificial Intelligence (AI) find the frame problem so very intractable[16]. If the quick fix solutions were workable there would have been no frame problem to start with. The fact that the problem continues to give sleepless nights to AI researchers means that there is something amiss with the proposed solution. But for a living organism with no choice of changing chips in its head this is no solace. Even for computer science researchers it entails unmanageable expansion of search space that normally has the undesirable consequence of failure of the computing system to figure out results within realistic time frame and available computing resources. As Stemberger and Bernhardt (1999) rightly remark: "With a mathematical model that makes no pretension toward cognitive-psychological reality, massive seriality is fine. However, within actual human beings, massive seriality is a problem" (424).

Moreover, quite often, it so happens that the "representation over which mental processes are actually defined are much shorter than whole theories" (MDW, 31. Unless indicated otherwise the italics are in the original quotes). This means that inclusion of entire theory/ assumptions into search space is not necessary and at times may even be the factor responsible for arriving at wrong results. That is, in our context of cognitive processes the option of undertaking total searches inclusive all background assumptions is time consuming, computationally taxing, and at times even unwarranted. After all, in our day to day dealings with the world or even with each other we don't consult our entire belief system in its totality to arrive at an appropriate decision. Our belief systems are too bulky to be thought through all at once. On most occasions, as we know from our day to day experiences, such total searches of belief systems may even be quite

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counter-productive. For example, when faced with a predator, any living organism is faced with the urgent task of taking a quick decision to save itself. This may, on occasions, entail just climbing over the nearest tree around without indulging in complicated calculations about what are the other possible ways of avoiding the impending danger or which is the best tree to climb in such situations, is such a tree available in one's surroundings in the current situation so on and so forth. And don't we so often see our colleagues from computer science department worried to no end about yet another intractable melody called "combinatorial explosion" in technical jargon ? Furthermore, don't we know all too well what such calculations lead to in real life situations ? What counts in such situations is not endless weighing of pros and cons of possible actions by the central systems responsible for fixation of beliefs, nut quick action that does away with all hypotheticals. If the effort is successful, then there is some possibility that such quick actions are what will contribute to an organism's own success in life as well as the success of its progenitors if they are fortunate enough to otherwise survive[17].In short, there is no way that anyone can in advance enumerate all possible situations that one may encounter in one's entire lifetime. The moral of the story is that, in so far as NSN insists on a massive modularity account of mind, meaning that "mind is a collection of modules, a system of organs, or a society of experts" (Pinker 1998:255), the effects of global features of belief systems cannot be wished away[18]. And this "remains true *even if it's assumed that all of the global features of belief systems that have effects are syntactic*" (MDW,33).

We of course did look at a possible way out of such a scenario by treating the whole theory / context as a computational domain, but the unrealistic nature of this option almost amounts to there being no option at all. And this is no good news for the new synthesis nativist. If even M(CTM) is in trouble, so will be the case with massive modularity and NSN. This is the magnitude of problems when we have all along been supposing that, for keeping the situation simple and manageable, the global properties of representations that affect cognition are syntactic in character. However, if it so turns out (and as of now there is no actual evidence as to why it should not so turn out) that the features in question are neither syntactic nor capable of being co-opted into a syntactic form, then, as Fodor admits, there is no way that CTM can be saved whatever be one's reading of

"syntactic determination" (MDW, 109 n.8). That is, if taken literally in its stronger version (i.e., E(CTM)), the theory "verges on incoherence. Taken liberally [i.e., M(CTM)], it lacks empirical plausibility" (MDW,55). Fodor's diagnosis of the situation is that while the "theory that mental processes are syntactic gets it right about logical form having causal powers; but...it makes mental causation local, and that can't be true in the general case" (MDW,37). In Fodor's opinion, in principle, there is a way out of this impasse. The way out is that "the properties of a representation that determine its causal-cum-inferential role, though.... exhaustively syntactic, needn't be either local or insensitive to context" (MDW,38).

This is, however, just a hunch about how we could possibly get out of the muddy situation that we have got into by embracing massive modularity. In reality there is no solution yet because the AI researchers so far have had no luck in finding a way of accommodating context-dependent determinants except through the above mentioned strategy of undertaking exhaustive searches of entire theories or contexts in which the representations are embedded. As was discussed above, such a solution is no solution. More so when we keep in view the fact that solution has to be workable on real living organisms that are in no position to make any wilful changes in their physical architecture to make it amenable for trying out new solutions. The problem in the real world is in fact not of finding a solution, but of reverse engineering. Even if we ignore these real life worries for the time being, there is still no real solution for accommodating background assumptions in the classical computational theory. So as things stand now, "the computational theory of mental processes doesn't work for abductive inferences" or what AI researchers refer to as the frame problem (MDW, 41). As Fodor points out, "context dependence and globality are two sides of the same coin" (MDW,43). It is not that one has all of a sudden discovered some major flaws in the classical computational models. There is no problem with classical computational Models in so far as mechanical operations are concerned. They do a very fine job in such contexts. But problems tend to get out of hand when we apply such models to mental processes. In the case of mental processes problems become unmanageable because these processes are sensitive to global properties of belief systems. And as of now no shrewd guess is available about how to handle such a situation.

This impasse forces a search for some new architectural designs that are sensitive to global features of mental processes[19]. But does the failure of CTM, that is, even in its much watered down version, entail closing down of the thriving business of cognitive science ? Will it really result in mass unemployment warranting political intervention ? Fodor believes that there is no reason for getting alarmed on this score though there are many other better reasons to feel panicky. For example, there is a good reason to feel panicky about the failure of massive modularity thesis because with it the entire edifice of NSN falls like a house of cards. But there is also some reason for hope because massive modularity is not the only game in town that we can play. As we saw in the very beginning of this essay, the modular aspects of minds are very much amenable to interpretation on classical computational lines. Such an opening for meaningful research still exists because, as we saw before, the encapsulated nature of modular mechanisms protects them from the trouble of globality. In fact encapsulation and issues of globality are tied in an inverse relation. Greater the encapsulation of a module, less its sensitivity to global properties of belief systems. Because modular mechanisms are limited in their operation to just their proprietary database, there is no frame problem for them. Nor do they have any problem in determining what is of relevance to them in a situation. Since they are encapsulated and their domain of application is clearly (i..e., innately) marked out for them, they usually have small and manageable databases that permit exhaustive searches without running the danger of failure in coming up with correct and expected results. As Fodor is quick to point out : "Frame problems and relevance problems are about how deeply, in the course of cognitive processing, a mind should examine its background of epistemic commitments. A modular problem-solving mechanism doesn't have to worry about that sort of a thing because, in point of architecture, only what's in its database can be in the frame. This means... that to the extent to which a system is modular, it doesn't have to treat framing as a computational *problem*" (MDW, 63-63). It is for such reasons that we say that modules have typically shallow ouputs. The extreme case is of course of reflexes as they are encapsulated from everything except their current input. Either they go "off automatically or not at all" (MDW, 64).

The Logic of Selection Pressures at Work

This brings us to the last set of theoretical arguments that NSN utilises from Neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory. It is believed that we can still interpret massive modularity in a way that bypasses the troublesome considerations alluded to in the preceding paragraphs. This is achieved by interpreting massive modularity as implying that the mind is endowed with special purpose mechanisms for solving every type of problem that it is capable of encountering, a kind of society of experts hinted at by Pinker. "The mind is a system of organs of computation... The mind has to be built out of specialized parts because it has to solve specialized problems" (Pinker 1998:21 &30). This should definitely shield the mind from the trouble of consulting belief systems to arrive at best possible solution to the problem at hand. In this scenario there are no beliefs that the mind needs to consult. If this is how a largely modular mind is supposed to work, and there are indeed such minds, then let us have a look at the evidence that is available in support of this proposal.

The first argument that is utilised in support of this interpretation is the one that rules out the usefulness of general-purpose mechanisms on evolutionary grounds (Cosmides & Tooby: 1994). The jack of all master of none logic (Cosmides & Tooby 1992, Pinker 1998). But what we need to note here is that it is not as easy to rule out the usefulness of such mechanisms as it is made out to be by the NSN theorists[20]. As was discussed above, if it is granted that (and who has ever denied it ?) cognition involves fixation of true beliefs, then there is no way that we can deny the existence of a general-purpose mechanism for realising such a task[21]. However, what allows new synthesis nativists to believe that they have been successful at doing away with general purpose mechanisms is their peculiar usage, bordering on the metaphorical, of technically well defined concepts[22]. Take for, example, the concept of module. We have already looked at this topic in the opening paragraphs to at least have a working idea of what a module is. But for Pinker, perhaps the most popular NSN advocate credited with spinning out a best seller almost every other year: "The mind is set of module,is, but the modules are not encapsulated boxes.[They] need not be tightly sealed off from one another, communicating only through a few narrow pipelines" (Pinker 1998:23&31)[23]. If this is how things are, can we really blame Fodor for lamenting that modularity has come to mean

"different things on different tongues" (Fodor 1998:127)[24]? Whatever Fodor or anyone else for that matter may think, Pinker's definite advice is. "Don't take the 'module' metaphor too seriously..; people can mix and match their ways of knowing" (Pinker 1998:315)[25]. The worse is that you can't even hold such a crass prag. atism against new synthesis nativists. It is all integral part of their doctrine. As Pinker puts it bluntly (and how more blunt can anyone be !): "our brains were shaped for fitness, not for truth... we are apt to want our version of the truth, rather than the truth itself, to prevail" (Ibid., 305)[26]. So in the final analysis it is my word against your word. Can anyone expect to be more post-modernist than that ?

The other trouble the NSN faces is what is termed as the input problem (Cosmides & Tooby 1992 & 2000; MDW, 7If.). There is an input problem because even if it is granted that mind is massively modular, we are still left with the problem of assigning input (s) to different modules as we move up in the representational hierarchy and enter the troublesome world of central processes responsible for fixation of belief. It is a big problem because how will any modular mechanism know where and to whom to direct any particular representation[27]. That is, module doesn't know or is at a loss to decide to whom the representation in question belongs. Since mind is endowed with only domain specific mechanisms through and through, NSN followers are obliged to explain how different representaions get allocated to the right kind of modules[28]. Is it, as Fodor queries, the "do all" sensorium of the empiricists that massive modularity relies upon ? And if this what NSN had to rely upon in the final analysis, then there was no point in labouring so much about computational theory and everything else. So either one gives up everything one has laboured for or recognises the need for at least some non-modular mechanisms on evolutionary grounds, be it the all purpose sensorium or something else.

Though NSN literature is unquestionably vast and the marketed shopping list definitely very unnerving to allow a detailed discussion of them all in the current context, let us take for consideration the much publicised operations of the Cheater Detection Module (CDM hereinafter)[29]. This is perhaps one of the most efficient way of demonstrating the nature of difficulty that the input problem poses. As those familiar with the NSN literature would recall, the CDM is celebrated for its success in situations of social exchange that were very important for evolution of our hunter

gatherer ancestors. NSN literature also does give the impression as if it is definitely because of our ancestors' success at such tasks that we have evolved to be humans with our current capacities. You may be eager to know how such a mechanism gets about its important business. But quite like the uninteresting stories of all modules, CDM story is also equally simple and uninteresting. The CDM responds to only those situations that are of the nature of typical social exchanges and sorts out exhanges in which cheating is taking place from those where it isn't. The first difficulty that this account encounters is that if CDM becomes "on" if and only if the context involved in question is social exchange, then how would a module that is earlier than CDM in the processing hierarchy would "know" whether a particular representation is to be fed to CDM or, for example, a Mate Detection Module ? This dilemma arises because the earlier module that was to take such a "decision" is no less specialised or dumb than the CDM. However hard one may try, you can't get beyond this impasse if modules are all that you have to go around in your pocket to do business in the world. They can't sort things out for you because modules by their very nature are very simple and clean fellows not used to dirtying their hands in such muddy affairs. If CDM is a module, then it is also expected to direct all its energies to those situations of social exchange where charting is taking place. That is why it is there in the first place; that is what evolution designed it for[30]. However boring such an occupation may appear to anyone who has had a taste of more interesting things in life, the CDM is doomed to be doing only this one uninteresting thing for life. In fact, as we saw in the very beginning, modules with their slavish ideology can't bargain for anything better. That is what they are. Give them their domain specific input, they would invariably and compulsively deliver an output[31]. Moreover, having a room of its own is more than a module with its slavish sensibilities could bargain from evolution's sting ways. And such a reward for modules must not have been without far reaching consequences for the evolution of higher organisms. If nothing else, it did at least kick us up a few ladders in the evolutionary hierarchy transforming us into information crunching demons devouring away resources of all other living beings left behind in the "cognitive arms race" (Pinker 1998:405)

The usefulness of general - purpose mechanisms is in general overlooked by NSN theorists on the ground that it conferred no adaptive

advantages on organisms endowed with such mechanisms (Tooby & Cosmides 1992; Cosmides and Tooby 1994; Pinker 1998). But the rejection does not appear to be too well thought out because NSN theorists are in no position to explain certain important features of human cognition, the features that cannot be satisfactorily accounted for without postulating the existence of general-purpose mechanisms. This is not a small mater if we keep in view their insistence on postulating the logic of evolutionary pressures at work for accounting for everything that a living organism is capable of achieving[32]. It appears that in their desire to counter the pervasive influence of "Standard Social Science Model", most theorists of NSN persuasion have developed a tendency to overlook the invaluable services that general-purpose mechanisms actually seem to perform in human cognition. Since modules are no good at general figuring out of things, general - purpose mechanisms must have served some evolutionary role. And the trouble that NSN position creates is not merely philosophical in nature but seriously affects cognitive science research (MDW, 77). For example, even in the cases of perceptual mechanism of different types it is not very easy to sort out things on modular basis. But at least in the cases of such mechanisms things do not go out of hand because sorting out takes place very "early in cognitive processing and that is mandatory.. [Such happens to be the case because] the domains of perceptual modules... can be detected psychophysically.. [It is for this reason] that mechanisms of perceptual analysis are prima facie good candidates for modularity" (MDW, 78). If we apply the same criterion to the supposed domain of CDM, there appears to be no evidence to indicate that the CDM domain can be detected psychophysically. Therefore, CDM does not turn out to be a good candidate for modularity.

Moreover, the fact that even in the case of language perception module "empirical solutions to the input analysis problems aren't easy to come by" should make those who are all too optimistic of extending modular analysis to domains like CDM realise the utter enormity of the problem at hand (MDW, 78). If this much is granted, then massive modularists' aim of identifying representations that lie in proprietary domain of each module without taking into consideration the important role of domain-general mechanisms does not appear to be realisable in near future. Reason for this pessimism is that from whatever little that we currently know about

particular modules such a task is just not realisable owing to lack of necessary empirical details. Empirically, we just know too little to assert that we know how the mind works. The issue has to be settled module by module as we advance in our knowledge of the facts in question. It is accordingly fairly unwise to claim in our present state of knowledge that we know how the mind works. As Fodor points out : "By all the signs, the cognitive mind is up to its ghostly ears in abduction. And we do not know how abduction works" (MDW, 78).

The Abduction/Globality Trouble

Now, we are perhaps in a position to diagnose the problem with massive modularity and hence also with NSN. Firstly, massive modularity presupposes that cognitive architecture is largely modular. But this is actually not the case. As was discussed in last few sections, there is ample evidence that encourages us to believe that human mind is not massively modular. There are undoubtedly many peripheral features of the mind that are modular, but there are many more other interesting and central aspects that are not modular. All subsequent problems for massive modularity thesis or NSN are in a way spin off effects of this wrong supposition. While the inherently local nature of computations (as classically understood following Turing) does not pose any difficulties in a modular set up, things turn out quite differently when considerations of globality are looked into. If the human mind had turned out to be massively modular and resembled "a confederation of hundreds or thousands of functionally dedicated computers' as Tooby and Cosmides would like us to believe, then the problem of abduction would not just arise (2000 : 1171)[33]. All that massive modularists insist upon would have worked well if things were to so turn out because as a matter of definition encapsulated inferential processes are immune to such difficulties. But as of now there is not much evidence for believing in such an interpretation. In fact, Massive Modularity Thesis gets entangled in all kinds of problems because no hard empirical evidence is forthcoming in support of their thesis. As a matter of fact "much of what mind does best is 'abduction'" (MDW, 97). But if massive modularity gives in, there is no way that classical computations can cope with abductive aspects of cognition because such computations are intrinsically local. Classical computations are no good at tackling the frame problem. In a way, there is no frame problem for them. Their informational encapsulation shields them

against such trouble. And the failure of massive modularity means that we are still far from knowing how the mind works. How can we claim to know how the mind works when some massive modularists themselves admit that "no one yet knows with certainty how computations are physically realized" (Tooby & Cosmides 2000:1167)?

The other argument that is usually advanced in support of massive modularity is the one that justifies massive modularity on the grounds of selection pressures. That is, it explains massive modularity as "an evolutionary adaptation" (MDW, 79)[34]. The reason for invoking evolutionarily theory (i.e. neo-Darwinism) is the existence of complexity of life that is considered to be best explainable only as an adaptation to selection pressures. As Pinker categorically states : "Natural selection is the only explanation we have of how complex life *can* evolve, natural selection is indispensable to understanding the human mind" (Pinker 1998) : 155). However, what is missing in all these accounts is how complexity of life can provide the rationale for the supposedly massively modular character of our cognitive abilities that evolved under such selection pressures. While some contribution of selection pressures is undeniable, the use to which NSN theorists put this principle is quite akin to magic. What is important in the context under consideration, as Fodor points out, is "the plausibility that a new phenotypic property as an adaptation has nothing to do with its complexity. What counts is only how much genotypic alteration of the nearest ancestor that lacked the trait would have been required in order to produce descendants that have it.. In the present case, what matters to the plausibility that the architecture of our minds is an adaptation is how much genotypic alteration would have been required for it to evolve from the mind of the nearest ape whose cognitive architecture was different from ours" (MDW, 87-88). Thus it is not because we have accumulated many more innate beliefs which apes lack that our minds are different from theirs, but "some radical reorganization of global cognitive architecture must have occurred in the process of getting from their minds to ours" (MDW, 97).

Moreover, even a cursory look at the kinds of arguments that are in circulation on the matter (Cosmides Tooby & Barkow 1992; Davies 1999; Dawkins, 1996; Pinker, 1998; Plotkin, 1997) is convincing enough to make one realise how simplistic everything has been turned into. Things appear

too simplistic for more reasons that one. Firstly, genetic alteration does not affect psychological máke up directly. If genetic alterartion causes any systemic changes, then they have to be more at neurological level than psychological. So one has to first figure out how genetic alterations map on to resultant neurological changes and then figure out similar mapping between neurological make up of an organism and its cognitive architecture. And even a further similar exercise is due between reorganisation of cognitive architecture and resultant cognitive capacities. Secondly, those of us who have been familiar with the difficulties involved in figuring out how different psychological mechanisms supervene on the neurological architecture even in the simplest of cases and remember how little we know about the detailed neurological circuitry of the human brain cannot but appreciate how distant we still are from the final solution. So even if genetic variation is random and incremental, neurological consequences need not be so, and even if the latter are random and incremental, there is no guarantee that the resultant effects in the mental make up would be similar (Fodor 1998 : 167). To hope that the relationships across all the levels alluded to above would turn out to be linear in nature sounds too unrealistic unless one wishes to regress into postulating a designer for evolutionary designs. That is, a theological cosmology. However, in so far as we believe that it is possible to have well designed living organisms without there being any designer, what NSN theorists have been proposing sounds fairly unconvincing. At least for the time being there is no hard evidence available that compels us think their way.

As things now stand, it is "entirely possible that quite small neurological reorganisations could have effected wild psychological discontinuities between our minds and the ancestral ape's... Our brains are, at least by any gross measure, very similar to those of apes; but our minds are, at least by any gross measure, very different" (MDW, 88). In Fodor's opinion it is not unreasonable to suppose that small genetic and/or neurological alteration might have been the cause of widespread cognitive changes. Also, whatever little that we know of supervenience rules out the possibility that very small changes and or reorganisations in the brain could not have produced very large changes in cognitive capacities (MDW, 90). And all this is conceivable within strictly scientific praradigm and evidence that is currently available with us. So the possibility of non-linearity

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and complexity of relations between changes in neurological structures and / or changes in cognitive structures and changes in cognitive capacities, make us believe that genetically very similar organisms can have radically different psychologies (MDW, 93). If this is granted, then it is very likely that "our minds may have gotten here more or less at a leap even if our brains did not" (MDW, 93).

Moreover, when one bears in mind that we know very little about how the mind works and it is tough enough to make any progress in getting to know it any better, attempts to burden oneself further by wanting to also explain how it evolved can either be a consequence of confusion or misplaced research priorities. Without knowing considerably much more than we currently know, the whole exercise directed at knowing selection pressures that were responsible for shaping the mind that we know so little about is bound to remain speculative in nature and quite premature to be indulged in at this point of time. Wanting to know how something evolved without knowing much about what we are really talking about appears to be quite a bad research strategy. Also, the issue of selection pressures at work in shaping the mind is definitely an empirical question. For all we know mind may have evolved under selection pressures. No grudging that. But where is the evidence that explains how it really happened ? Moreover, it is not necessary to first know, if it is at all possible, what selection pressures induced the present state of affairs to know how our minds currently work. You don't have to first know the entire evolutionary history of a bodily organ to understand its current function. After all a great deal of physiology got worked out without any help from evolutionary theory (Fodor 1998: 210). Though Tooby & Cosmides (1992) rule out the possibility that one can know the function of an organ without taking into consideration selection pressures, Fodor appears quite justified in believing that "one can often make a pretty shrewd guess what an organ is for on the basis of entirely synchronic considerations" (MDW, 86). Moreover, it is more important to know how our minds work *now* rather than being too obsessed with how they worked in the ancestral environments of Pleistocene huntergatheres. Also, knowing the very fragile nature of the brain tissue many gaps in the evolutionary evidence may never be filled But fortunately, as was just alluded to, advances in research about the nature of mind are not tied to advances in evolutionary theory and we can continue our efforts at knowing

the mind better without worrying too much about progress in evolutionary theory. The advances in evolutionary theory no doubt would make the entire scientific story look neater, but it is still too early to expect such neatness. Insistence on too clear and precise a picture of how things in their entirety should look may only hinder progress and distract us from issues that need our urgent and immediate attention. Thus Dennett's powerful campaign to the contrary not withstanding, for the time being we can safely conclude that "the gohst has been chased further back into the machine, but it has not been exorcised" (MOM, 127)[35]. And all is not lost if we so orient ourselves. As Fodor elsewhere remarks : "I think that sometimes, out of the corner of an eye... one can glimpse the true scientific view; austere, tragic, alienated, and very beautiful. A world that isn't *for* anything; a world that is just there (Fodor 1998 : 169).

NOTES

1. For a more recent overview, see Davies (1999).

2. And anyone who has been unfortunate enough to have ever dealt with such regimes would testify that the experience is not its worth even in gold.

3. Those interested in having a look at alternative perspectives can refer to Elman *et al.* (1996), Gottlieb (1992 &1998), Griffiths Stotz (2000), Johnson (1997), Lewontin (1995), and Thomas & Karmiloff- Smith (in press) for developmentalist approach, Smith & Thelen (1993), Thelen & Smith (1994) and L.B. Smith (1999) for dynamic systems approach , or Grossberg (2000) for complementarity perspective.

4. Though Pinker's book was first published in 1996, I have used the 1998 edition brought out by Allen Lane.

5. Jackendoff (1987a &b, 1992) also seems to fall within this category to the extent to which he believes in the existence of domain specific modules for central systems / capacities.

6. It is, however, pertinent to note that Fodor use Chomsky's idea of module (1980) not in the sense of innate database, but as a kind of input mechanism with the features outlined herein. For a clarification of different uses of the idea of modularity. See N. Smith (1999) & Fodor (2000, Chapters 1 & 4).

7. Shallice (1984) is, however, of the opinion that the mind may contain more

than Fodorian modules and equipotential systems" (246).

8.   There is indeed no doubt that Fodor is all along working with an assumption that human mind also has non-modular features. For e.g., see Fodor (1975). A part from MOM, I have also borrowed in my summary of the nature of modules many of the clarifications that Fodor offers in Fodor (1998, Chapter 11).

9.   For a discussion of problems with the idea of linking conscious accessibility of computations performed by input systems to the possibility of their being consciously reported, see Rosenthal (1991, 46f).

10.   Rosenthal (1991), however, believers that in some cases the cognitive impenetrability may as well be resulting from incompatibility of formats. Also experiments reporting effects of contextual facilitation through priming techniques is something that does not auger well for Fodor's thesis.

11.   For further discussion, see Fodor (1998 : 207) & MOM, 112.

12.   This is in sharp contrast Jackendoff's (1987 a & b, 1992) idea that central capacities can also be divided into domain specific modules.

13.   In fact Fodor goes to the extent of stating that "Everything we know is compatible with the claim that central problem-solving is subserved by equipotential neural mechanisms" (MOM, 119). His claim that we almost know nothing about what happens after information reaches the central processes is, however, debatable.

14.   Also see Tooby & Cosmides (1992: 66f.)

15.   By "computation in Turing's sense" Fodor means "processes that are ipso facto driven by local syntax" (MDW, 111 n.4).

16.   Sperber (1994), however, feels that the frame problem has been over-estimated.

17.   Also see Rosenthal (1991).

18.   Tooby & Cosmides (1992), however, also grant certain complexity of function to modules.

19.   It is not that no alternatives are available, but taking into consideration, for example, the available alterative of connections has the potential of complicating the situation further without entailing much gains in the present context. The interested reader can consult Elman et al. (1996). Also see n. 3 herein.

20. See L.B.Simith (1999: 282f). for details of how domain-general mechanisms can originate from domain-general mechanisms.

21. Also, massive modularists seem to take acceptance of any general -purpose mechanisms to mean ruling out innate cognitive endowment. But, as Fodor rightly points out, no such entailment exists (MDW, 70-71).

22. It's a different story that Pinker is never tired of cursing post-modernists for promoting such a usage in the academia. It may be noted that post-modernism occupies the fourth place (just after totalitarian regimes, feminism and political correctness) in Pinker's list of, to be done away with, evils in the world.

23. For an elaboration of the usefulness of the idea of modularity in the context of language without abandoning some of its central features see Jackendoff (1997, see 2.6).

24. It is pertinent to note here that Fodor's remark appear to be more appropriate in the case of Pinker than Karmiloff-Smith.

25. Those who are familiar with Fodor's characteristic ways of putting his detractors in a spot would be wondering how he could not have bargained for anything better. That Fodor is not someone who would take it lying low is clearly evidenced from the rigour of his arguments in MDW. Moreover, can one think of a more provocative title for one's book than Fodor (2000)? For further more specific remarks on NSN in general and Dworkin, Dennett, Pinker, and Plotkin in particular, see Fodor (1998), Chapters 14, 15 & 17.

26. One of the well known danger attached with such an approach, as Cowie (1999) has very recently reemphasised, is that it is all too often used for ideological purposes to justify existing social inequalities as inevitable consequence of our genetic make up.

27. However, such a difficulty would specifically arise only if the idea of modularity is interpreted in a restricted way as suggested by Fodor. In so far as no concrete proposal is made available for testing, it is difficult to visualise how Pinker's "mix and match" strategy would tackle the input problem.

28. Sperber (1994) does offer a solution to the input problem, but as Fodor points out, Sperber achievers the supposed success without bothering to explain how abstract invoked by NSN "come to be in the module's input representation in the first place" (MDW, 116 n.22). Therefore, unless there

is some convincing evidence to support such an interpretation, it amounts to your word against my word. The fact that input analysis is hard to come by even in much simpler cases of perceptual processes is something to which Sperber and others are not much willing to give any thought. It is, indeed, oversight of such important empirical facts that in the first place seems to allow them to think that there is no aspect of human cognition which cannot be dealt with and satisfactorily explained by them.

29. See, Cosmides & Tooby (1992 & 2000). Other available evolutionary accounts among others include those for co-operation (Sober & Wilson 1998), family (Sulloway 1996), language (Pinker 1994), art, religion and science (Mither 1996), and sex (Diamond 1997).

30. It may, however, be useful to examine whether incorporation of the idea of *interface module as* proposed by Jackendoff (1997) in the context of the architecture of the language faculty can be of any use in tackling the input problem as discussed herein.

31. For some interesting clinical material on the consequences , at times very tragic and painful, of malfunctioning and/ or damaged modules, see Ramchandran & Blakeslee (1999).

32. It is important to note that Chomsky has generally resisted moves aimed at explaining the existence of language faculty on evolutionary grounds, see, Chomsky (1972 & 1982).

33. Also see Tooby & Cosmides (1992:94f.).

34. As Tomasello (1999) has rightly pointed out, most humanly unique cognitive abilities are not amenable to explanation on usual evolutionary lines because their emergence does not fit well with the evolutionary time scale. Tomasello's proposal is that "cognition of the human kind is the product not only of genetic events taking place over many millions of years in evolutionary time but also of cultural events taking place over many tens of thousands of years in historical time and personal events taking place over many tens of thousands of hours in ontogenetic time" (216).

35. See Dennett (1991).

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TOWARDS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

ABHA SINGH

Human beings are born male and female according to the biological sex given to them. However, they are divided into masculine and feminine genders by being taught how to behave as males and females, and moreover, inculcate the particular ways of life prescribed for each gender by the society which nurtures them from birth.

Gender inequality i.e. the disparity between women and men and the disadvantages of women are not, of course, unique to India. There is much evidence of extensive gender based inequality even in the elementary matters of health care and nutrition in many regions across the world. But fairly detailed comparisons of mortality rates, morbidity rates, hospital care, nutritional attention etc. have been made in India. It proves that despite variations between regions within India, they clearly confirm fairly decisive picture of women being systematically deprived vis-a-vis men throughout the country.

In India, discrimination against women starts in the foetus, proceeds through systematic undernourishment in childhood and deprivation of education in adolescence, and ends in domestic violence and bride burning. In a scenario where the number of women to men is decreasing alarmingly -- unlike any other nation in the world -- they are all victims of that original discrimination a girl child faces at the fetal, natal and post natal stage which decides whether she is 'empowered' to live at all.

Possession of power by a person implies that the person has the authority to discriminate. Genderdisation of human beings is the primary structure through which their authority is exercised. It has assigned roles and functions to human being on the basis of sex and these have been

accepted as inherent to the person. The roles assigned to the male sex give access to and control of resources required for a subsistence and growth and those assigned to female sex are only derived from and secondary to the roles of the male. This ensures that the women can seldom possess power and whatev. authority she exercises is delegated to her by the man in her life.

Discrimination against women and their oppression is a heinous crime not merely against women but it is a sin against men and humanity as well "It is a serious crime against human civilization. If the family or home is the cradle of civilization, culture and development, and if influence of mother in a family surpasses all other forms of influence, the pain and the groanings of that mother will remain unresounded in the ears of her children. It will definitely affect the happiness of the whole family."[1]

Gender roles oppress man as well as woman because they do not respect the nature of the person. Gender assigns roles, responsibilities and functions to the person based on sex irrespective of whether that is what the person wants or is capable of, Capacity is considered to be inherent in the masculinity or the feminity of person. Through a system of rewards, to mark approval and punishments to mark disapproval, this power structure has been perpetuated for ages.

Not being vested with any power directly, women do not possess the means of changing this situation by emancipating themselves physically, mentally or emotionally, since they do not possess the resources to support their efforts. They have been denied education, mobility and means of production. They have been denied getting identified or recognized as individuals and voicing themselves. The followers of every religion have ensured that women be faceless and voiceless. The situation is in no way better today.

Women have been nurtured in the belief that man by nature is better informed, can counter violence, can provide a shield, safety and security. These beliefs are well ingrained in women, they have accepted that, because of the difference in sex, nature has ordained for them only the secondary subservient roles which are derived according to the expectations of men. As secondary roles do not have a direct economic value those who perform these roles are not counted as productive. Hence a woman's value in her own eyes is much less than that of man. We can therefore

understand why the life of woman was never valued highly. Its worth depended on the convenience or contribution she could make to man in the form of helping him to realise his roles and satisfy his desires.

In the backdrop of the social scene cited above a paramount question crops up in any normal brain. Should sex / gender bias be assumed to be unavoidable ? In order to find out a satisfactory answer to this question it appears better to think over one's own position in life. Above all, one finds oneself as a human being whose thoughts and beliefs, are influenced by one's setting in the family and society. Quite likely, given another setting and influence one could have lived, acted and thought quite differently. Thereupon, the issue of genderdisaition of humanity gains paramount ethical importance as ethics belongs to the self understanding of every human being.

The ideal is a 'happy life' Happy life does not intend the narrow egoistic satisfaction of individual needs but the enrichment or protection of life by mutal give and take policy. Thus ethics is a vision which shapes one as person who is responsible for co-existence with other persons. Now the question is how to define the person. This is a philosophical question about one's own being and about the being of other persons as well. Peter Kemp explaining the concept of person writes, "..I am a person from the moment I discover myself and understand myself as a will-to-life and at the same time discover others as a condition for expanding the capacities of my own life. A person is then a self-conscious physical being who lives by receiving something from and giving something to other self-conscious physical being".[2] Thus the concept of person implies an autonomous will. Hence autonomy supposes, on the one hand, a separation from others by which an individual has specific personality and, on the other hand, an association with others by which others recognize one's self as autonomous. However, self - autonomy can be interpreted in terms of capacities such as responsibility, accountability, independence etc. Ethical interpreting of human well-being presupposes the individual's capacity to develop and pursue one's own conceptions of the good. Maeve Cooke perhaps had this idea in mind when he wrote : "The autonomous self is held to be in some sense self-directing, it must be able is some sense to see itself as author of its own life-history and of its constructions of personal identity."[3] Self must be responsible and accountable for its actions. Meaning thereby, the self

musth take issue with external forces that influence its life and make querry in a responsible and accountable way, regarding their inevitability.

Self-authorship implies independence. By independence is meant objectivity which forbids over-reliance on the opinions and judgements of others in one's views of the world, relationships to others, self-definitions and narrative constructions of identity, it also calls for the attempt to free oneself from the pernicious influence of one's own earlier life.[4] Self authorship also comprises of purposive rationality and capability to evaluate or select from among a range of options, those which the self judges to be desirable from the point-of view of its self-identity. Hence strong evaluation demands certain creative powers, dispositions such as flexibility and open mindedness and faculties such as memory and imagination. It also has a social material dimension. If the self is autonomously to select goals on the basis of its strong evaluation, it must have at its disposal certain material goods such as food, clothing and accomodation and will receive upbringing and education that enable the requisite powers, dispositions and faculties to flourish. Strong evaluation is possible only when sufficiently diverse options are available. If the self can choose only from among trivial options or if all the choices are potentially horrendous or evil, then strong evaluation is not possible.

Finally, self authorship is central not just to the concept of personal autonomy but to that of public or political autonomy. Citiznes are held to be politically automous to the extent they see themselves as authors of their own laws. Political theorists such as John Rawls and Habermans have emphasized the internal connection between personal autonomyand political autonomy. The thesis here is that the development of personal autonomy is impeded by lack of public autonomy and that political autonomy is justified through reference to the value of personal autonomy. But the personal autonomy of women in Indian society is considerably impaired by economic and social disadvantages as well as by forces of manipulation and control resulting into their seclusion from public life and their lack of political power.

Above discussion compels us to hold that gender inequality is rooted in denial of autonomy to women; In India the voice of women's liberation is often sound wired and cacophonous Nevertheless India cannot remain unaffected by the influence of women's liberation movement in view of urbanisation, industrialisation and modernisation. Since there is no basic

difference in the mental capability of men and women, women do not differ from men in their capability of choosing rational goals in their self-interest and in their choice of reasonable means for the achievement of those goals. Although the biological factor connects women with child bearing which makes her weak, at least for the time being, and thereupon paves the way for her exploitation. Thus the base of gender discrimination is inherent in human biology, but it can be conditioned. Women should have the same opportunities as men to make most of the abilities they have. Social options for men must be extended to women so that they can compete on equal terms. As Ferguson writes :

> If men and women make different choices as to how to develop what economists call "human capital" that is their skill and abilities, including their formal education and job training, this is due not to innate gender prejudices and skill e.g. that men are more competitive and aggressive and women more nurturant and submissive. Rather it is realistic options that society and individual circumstance provide.[5]

Therefore, people must be assessed as individuals and should not be lumped into 'female' and 'male' The roles occupied by males and females must be kept flexible to enable people to do what they are best suited for. Inequality based on an obvious difference between males and females produce a divided society with a sense of superiority on the one side and a sense of inferiority on the other. Therefore, sexual inequality has more divisive effect than any other form of inequality. It also creates a feeling of hopelessness among women since their sex is not the product of their own actions and their is nothing they can do to change.

Hence, the issue of women's empowerment is not concerned with a group of people we like to be benefitted, but with a type of injustice we want to see eliminated. However, it is sad to note that thinkers like John Rawls whose *Theory of Justice* has, in fact, done much to draw attention to the political and ethical importance of individual freedom, avoids the issue of justice between men and women. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* is that all human beings are seen as rational maximisers. He advocated an optional share of available utilities / welfare / entitlements to all. His principle of justice safeguards the priority of individual liberty, subject to similar liberty for all. His accounting

of inequality concentrates not on distribution of utility, but on that of 'primary goods'. These are the means such as income, wealth, liberty etc. that help people to pursue their respective objectives freely.

But equal distribution of primary goods is practically not possible due to the freedom enjoyed by two people according to their different status in the society. Conforming with this idea Amartya Sen writes :

> ....making comparisons of the primary goods different people have, is not quite the same as comparing the freedoms actually enjoyed by different persons, even though the two can be closely related. Primary goods are means to freedom, but they connot represent the extent of freedom, given the diversity of human beings in converting primary goods into the freedom to pursue their respective objectives. Given the variation in sex, age, inherited characteristics, environmental differences etc. that may prevail among and within groups of people, an equal distribution of primary goods may go with very unequal levels of freedom.[6]

Equal holding of primary goods may make people of weaker sex less free to pursue their own well-being, unless they get special facilities in participating in the choice of common social institutions and in influencing general political decisions.

Special facilities or affirmative action should not be limited to seat reservation in educational or political institutions. Reservations were originally conceived as a means of creating social equality. Certainly reservations are politically expedient to the extreme but women's empowerment through reservation is merely a hallucination. Reservations should be accompanied by a multi-prolonged effort for all round development of women. The task should not be left to the government but shared by the society at large.

Empowerment of women through reservation in parliament is a mockery of women's problem. Will the increase of women parliamentarians reduce the incidence of female foetus abortions ? Can it reduce the number of female infanticide ? Will it stop discrimination between boys and girls ? Will it lessen demands for dowry, maltreatment to daughter in laws, wife bashing, deaths in contrived accidents and neglect of widows ? The answer to every question is simply - no. And the reason is neither poverty nor lack of education. Recent demographic survey shows that the female birth rate

is decreasing fast in so called educated and well to do states such as Punjab and Haryana. "Amniocentesis based female foeticides are the highest in Haryana and Punjab amongst the educated middle class families who believe in the small family norm and exercise their son-preference, by routinely getting rid of higher birth order girl foetuses."[7] Subsequent discrimination too prevails as brutal sense of son-preference in a rational world view where the daughter's utility and value addition is meant for some other family, not one's own.

Anyway, the goal is the liberated woman, the complete woman, self-reliant, confident of her relations with and position vis-a-vis men, freed from the guilt complex of being natural. A complete woman-not just a complete woman for a complete man but one who could demand and get the complete man, a woman who would set her own agenda and know how to fight for it. Therefore, the need is total change in our outlook. Hence a workable solution could be to put economic, political and educational power within the reach of women with good guidance and support so that they could take up the cause on their own.

NOTES

1. Gregory D. Souza, "Gender Discrimination : Reason and Remedies", *Journal of Dharma,* Vol. XX, No. 1, p. 64.

2. Peter Kemp, "From Ethics to Bioethics", *Questioning Ethics,* Ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley, (Rautledge, London & New York). pp. 284-85.

3. Maeve Cooke, "Questioning Autonomy", *Ibid.,* p. 266.

4. *Ibid.,* p. 267.

5. Ann Ferguson 'A Feminist Aspect Theory of Self', *Women Knowledge and Reality,* ed. Ann Garry, and Marilyn Pearsall (Unwin, Hyman, Boston, 1989), P. 95.

6. Amartya, Sen, "Individual Freedom", *The Times of India,* Patna, 16th Oct.98.

7. Amrit Srinivasan, "India's Missing Women", *The Times of India,* Patna, 28th April. 2001.

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DISCUSSION : I

"The Argument From Illusion" - A Response to Dr. K. Srinivas

In his article entitled "The Argument from Illusion", published in the *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* (Vol.xxx No.2, April 2003) Srinivas observes that the 'argument form illusion' has been employed both by the western epistemologists and the advaitins, but with a difference. While the western epistemologists (especially those who subscribe to the theory of phenomenalism) employ the argument from illusion "mainly to abolish the distinction between 'what is the case' and 'what appears to be the case'"[1], the advaitin makes use of the argument from illusion "only to substantiate the view that there is a distinction between 'what is the case' and 'what appears to be the case'."[2] The point of Srinivas is that while the phenomenalists consider that every thing that is perceived is real and there is no external reality ;independent of one's perceptual experience, in contrast to the phenomenalist, the advaitin gives us reasons to demarcate between the world of objects (appearances) and Brahman (Reality) and these views are reflected in their argument from illusion respectively.

My comments are confined to the above observations of Srinivas. I agree with the view of Srinivas that both the advaitin and western epistemologists, in a manner of speaking, make use of the argument from illusion but I beg to differ from his vew that the phenomenalists employ the argument form illusion 'mainly' to abolish the distinction between 'what is the case' and 'what appears to be the case'. There is a basic difference between the phenomenalist and the advaitin though both of them employ the argument form illusion. This basic difference is something that Srinivas did not spell out explicitly in his article. The objective of this paper is to make this point obvious.

This argument form illusion is advanced by philosophers who oppose the naive realist account of perception. According to naive realism objects seem as they are and are as they seem to be; objects are known directly, that is there is nothing between them and our knowledge of them. Challenging the position of naive realism, sense-datum philosophers argue that we are directly aware of colours, shapes, sizes, sounds, tastes etc., (sense-data) rather than physical objects when we perceive them. They advance serval arguments in support of their view and the chief among them is the argument form illusion.

The argument from illusion refers to several kinds of illusion. Firstly, it includes cases where we mistake one object for the other, for instance when a figure in a wax-museum is mistaken for a real person or vice-versa; secondly the cases of total hallucinations such as Macbeth's visionary dagger, and the pink-rats which the drunkard sees; the third class of cases points to the variations is the appearances of an object such as the large tower that looks small when seen from a distance, the round coin which looks elliptical when seen from an angle; finally it is argued that the way things appear to us is never just a consequence of their own nature because it is causally dependent on factors such as the state of light, and on our own mental and physical conditions.

Thinkers like G.E.Moore, Bertrand Russell, C.D.Broad, H.H.Price and A.J.Ayer have used this argument in their epistemologial writings. Ayer's work *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* begins with the discussion on the argument from illusion. In this context Ayer observes that when one confronts with an illusory situation, say perceiving a straight stick as bent (when it is half-immersed in water) what one directly perceives is not the material object (the stick) but only a bent-appearance and Ayer calls it as sense - datum (pl. sense-data). Arguing further, Ayer observes that even in real perceptual situations where a person perceives a bent stick as bent what he directly perceives, is only a sense-datum, because the initial responses of both illusory and real perceptual situations are the same. When we perceive a straight stick as bent due to illusion or perceive a bent stick as bent in a real situation, the initial perceptual situations are qualitativery the same. Therefore, in all perceptual situations - veridical or illusory - what we directly perceive is only sense-datum, but not material object. Thus Ayer concludes that the sense-datum is the 'primary element'

that is apprehended in all perceptual situations - real or illusory. When one perceives a straight stick as bent or perceives a bent stick as it is, in both of these situations what one is directly aware of is the 'bent appearance' and this cannot be doubted at any cost. It may be doubted whether he perceives a bent stick or straight stick, but he cannot doubt the awareness of the bent-appearance (sense-daturm). In other words, the inferences from sense-data may be doubted but sense-datum by itself is beyound doubt. Therefore 'sense-data' are conceived as the 'indubitable elements' of our perceptual situations. This is also the point of argument of Price in his famous book *Perception*. There he writes :

> "When I see a tomato there is much that I can doubt. I can doubt whether it is a tomato that I am seeing, and not a cleverly painted piece of wax. I can doubt whether there is any material thing there at all. Perhaps what I took for a tomato was really a reflection; perhaps I am even the victim of some hallucination. One thing however I cannot doubt : that there exists a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other colour-patches, and having a certain visual depth, and that this whole field of colour is directly present to my consciousness"[3].

Thus the western epistemologists advance 'the argument from illusion' primarily to introduce the notion of 'sense-data' that constitute the foundations or undoubted basic elements of empirical knowledge. Subsequently they raise the question about the relation between sense-data and physical object. In such an inquiry, western epistemologists divide into two camps - causal theorists and phenomenalists. The causal theorists (eg.Russell) believe in the existence of real physical object over and above sense-data. Russell pleads in his work *The Problems of Philosophy* that sense-data suggest only the appearances and not the real properties of the objects. Referring to the perceptions of a table, Russell argues that "the real table if there is one, is not the same as what we immediately experience by sight or touch or hearing. The real table, if there is one, is not *immediately* known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known."[4] It is thus opined by Russell that sense-data give us mere appearances and not real properties of the table. They are those that are caused by the physical object under different conditions of perception.

The phenomenalist (eg.Ayer) conceives the physical object as a

sum total of actual and possible sense-data. According to this view any amount of actual sense-data cannot be equated with a physical object as there are some more possible sense-data, left over. For instance when a table is perceived by a person from different angles and distances of vision or when it is perceived by different persons from different perspectives, only actual sense-data are perceived. The table cannot be identified with these actual sense-data, because some more possible sense-data are still left-over. To put it in the language of Ayer :

> "The actual percepts that are presented to any observer or even to the totality of observers at all times, are too scanty to answer to our conception of the physical world. It was for this reason, as we have seen, that Berkeley required an ever-vigilant deity to keep the world under observation, at times when other spirits were not being supplied with the necessary ideas".[5]

Ayer argues that if the phenomenalist's thesis is to be plausible, it has to distinguish between actual and possible sense-data, with the result that "most of the propositions which render its account of the world will take the form of unfulfilled conditionals."[6] Consequently Ayer considered phenomenalism as a 'sophisticated form of realism'.[7] The same view has been expressed by Ayer in his *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* where he said that the statements about material things are not conclusively verifiable and therefore "no finite set of singular statements about sense-data can ever formally entail a statement about a material thing,..."[8]

Therefore neither the causal theorist nor the phenomenalist attempts to abolish the distinction between appearances and reality through their argument from illusion. In fact they want to make such a distinction. Consequently the claim of Srinivas that the argument from illusion is advanced by the western epistemologists (especially the phenomenalists) for abolishing the distinction between 'what is the case' and 'what appears to be the case' is not tenable.

In the course of his discussion, Srinivas observes that 'seeing' for the western epistemologists "is not just believing, but also knowing. In other words, 'to see' is 'to know'".[9] I have a difficulty in accepting this proposition of Srinivas because neither the causal theorist nor the phenomenalist identifies 'seeing' with 'knowing'. They make a clear demarcation between the two. According to them we 'see' colours, shapes

and sizes but 'know' physical objects either through inference (causal theorist version) or through logical construction (phenomenalist version).[10] Therefore for the western epistemologists seeing is not knowing. 'To see is to know' - is not the view of the western philosophers who use the argument from illusion. Incidentally it is not only the phenomenalist, but also the scientific or critical realists (like Russell) who use the argument from illusion precisely to draw the appearance / reality distiction and not to abolish it.

From the above discussion it is obvious that when the western epistemologists employ the argument from illusion they aim at introducing the notion of sense-data that constitute the foundations as well as the indubitable elements of empirical knowledge. On the contrary when the advaitin employs the argument from illusion his objection is not to find out either the foundations or the indubitable elements of empirical knowledge, but only to claim that our daily transactional *(vyavaharika)* world is as unreal as the snake 'seen' in a rope. The advaitin argues that the unreality of the *vyavaharika-satta* is realized the moment Brahman is realised. Thus the goal of the advaitin's inquiry is a philosophical defense of the revealed vedic doctrine of Brahman - the supreme reality. To put it in other words, in advancing the argument from illusion, while the western epistemologists are concerned with building a scientific and logical theory of perception, the advaitins are concerned with a metaphysical defense of non-dualist Sruti-Texts. This is the basic difference between the western epistemologists and the advaitins, though both of them employ, in manner of speaking, their own versions of the argument from illusion.

NOTES

1. *Indian Philosophical Quarterly,* vol., XXX No. 2, April 2003, p. 238.

2. *Ibid.,* p. 239.

3. H.H.Price, *Perception,* Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, 1932, p. 3.

4. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy,* Oxford University press, ninth Impression, 1995, pp. 3-4.

5. A.J.Ayer, *The Central Questions of Philosophy,* Macmillan, 1979, p, 107.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.,* p. 108.

8. A.J.Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge,* The Macmillan Press Ltd., Reprint 1979, p. 239.

9. *Indian Philosophical Quarterly, Op.Cit.*, p. 238.

10. A.J.Ayer, *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge., Op.Cit.*, p. 243ff.

B. Sambasiva Prasad

DISCUSSION : II

"The Argument From Illusion" - All Appearance and no Reality

Phenomenalism :

In response to K.Srinivas' observation that the Argument from Illusion has been employed both by the Western epistemologists and the Advaitins, but with a difference that while the "Western epistemologists", especially those who subscribe to the doctrine of phenomenalism employed the "argument from illusion" mainly to abolish the distinction between "What is the case" and "What appears to be the case" (p.238),[1] 'Advaitin too makes use of the argument from illusion, but only to substantiate the view that there is a distinction between "what is the case" and "what appears to be the case" (p. 239), B. Sambasiva Prasad has, very rightly argued for its possible vulnerability. He has correctly shown that at least in the case of A.J.Ayer, the ardent British exponent of phenomenalism, observation of K. Srinivas is rather misleading and not supported by careful textual reading of Ayer's position. Since phenomenalism is an epistemic programme of providing empirical foundations for our knowledge of external world, a phenomenalist has to begin his task with the reality of sense-data, that is 'the given something', which serves as the basic foundation of our knowledge of the physical world. Argument from illusion enables a phenomenalist to strengthen his case for the existence of sense-data, whether or not our perception is veridical. It is these 'givens' that are further interpreted by mind and used as building blocks for structuring the edifice of knowledge. Speaking about the two components of knowledge, C.I.Lewis, in his *Mind and the World Order* maintained that

"If there be no datum given to the mind, then knowledge must be altogether contentless and arbitrary; there would be nothing which it must be true to. And if there be no interpretation which the mind imposes, then thought is rendered superfluous, the possibility of error becomes inexplicable, and the distinction of true and false is in danger of becoming meaningless."[2]

Sir Russell Brain in his *The Nature of Experience* (London, OUP, 1959) has also maintained that "abnormal experiences as illusions and hallucinations are relevant to the sense-datum theory of perception, because if having an hallucination to which no object corresponds is a sensory experience in itself indistinguishable from seeing a real object, this is a strong argument for the view that seeing a real object also involves experiencing a sense datum which is generated by the brain and is therefore independent of the object.[3] He further curtly remarks that "some philosophers have devoted much ingenuity to providing different descriptions of illusions and hallucinations, but the problem is not primarily a semantic one but an empirical one".[4] Further, there are certain experiences which we always have as illusory experiences but nevertheless we, for all practical purposes, treat them as if they are real ones; e.g. perceptions of sizes and shapes of moon and sun, stationary state of earth and many other heavenly bodies. Argument from illusion and hallucination (and dream too) is not the only one that confirms for phenomenalists the presence of independent sense-data. There is Berkeley's famous argument from Relativity of Perception, Moore's argument from common sense, Argument from Physiology by J.C.Eccles, and C.I.Lewis' argument from the nature of Empirical Knowledge. All these arguments[5] were proffered in support of the philosophical claim that our knowledge must be limited because seeing, hearing and other avenues of sensory perception are systematically defective, or at least incapable of disclosing to us anything with properties or characteristics that we suppose ordinarily physical objects have. There is a further claim implied in these arguments that there is only one kind of thing that we can ever really or strictly perceive- the sense-data or sensory qualities, that they are the entities entirely different in character from physical or material objects. The phenomenalists believed like Berkeley, that "to be is to be perceived" is correct in respect to the immediate data of perception, and further agreed that material things

are constituted by sense-data. They however departed from Berkeley in agreeing with the realist that material things *do* exist unperceived. This position certainly seems to be incompatible. If the sense-data do not exist unperceived, and physical objects are constituted out of sense data, how can the latter exist unperceived and independent? Argument from illusion and hallucination and, for that matter, any other argument used to establish the real existence of sense-data is simply incapable of resolving this incompatibility. Ayer is aware of this incompatibility because he does say:

> If material thing were really the sum of its "sensible qualities" – that is to say, an aggregate of sense-contents, or even a whole composed of sense-contents – then it would follow from the definitions of material thing and a sense-content that no thing could exist unperceived.[6]

Berkeley, though an empiricist like Ayer, did not find anything inane in invoking the hypothesis of Divine providence in depriving material objects of their independent reality. Ayer being consistent with his empirical creed could not take recourse to Berkeley's path. Ayer spelt out an another important sense in which physical objects could be said to be constituted out of sense-data and this sense does not require saying that they are composed of them. Following Russell, they may be regarded as logical constructions out of sense data. This step of Ayer enabled him to shift the whole problem of the external world to a linguistic level – one of exhibiting the logical relationships between physical object statements and the sense-data-statements. This involved, as is well known, a vigorous programme of rigorous translation of physical-object statements into sense-datum statements. I shall not comment upon the failure of this programme because of the impossibility of phenomenalistic reduction which was due to i) the translations could not be given without avoiding in any step reference to some or the other physical object and ii) the phenomenalist's supposition that empirical concepts are, in principle, completely definable, is extremely doubtful. These two points which constitute major objections to phenomenalists programme of the Logical Positivists have been explained at length by critics like Friedrich Waisman L. W. Beck and Robert Holmes. Thus, to quote Beck, "for all of its sophistication, phenomenalism has, in the eyes of many philosophers, met with no more success in trying to solve this problem than traditional theories have."[7] At this stage I

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cannot resist the temptation of mentioning a crucial Reconstruction of Philosophy Programme proposed by the Pragmatist John Dewey and two ordinary language analyses: one by Ryle and another by J.L.Austin. Dealing with all of them here is neither desirable nor practicable. I shall however fondle a bit with Austin's remarks because they seem to have bearing on the Argument from illusion which has been placed in contrast by K.Srinivas to its employment by Advaitins rather preposterously.

According to Austin, phenomenalist's problem is contrived from the start, Philosopher's question whether we perceive material things departs from the ordinary language. Common man has practically no occasion to use such expressions as "perceive" and "material thing". The philosopher's use of "directly perceive' is particularly out of focus. Being said to perceive something directly makes sense only by comparison with cases in which we can be said to see things *indirectly* and these are special cases where again we do not have uniformity in uses of expressions. Austin gives a number of examples and tenders several considerations to show that "the philosopher's use of 'directly perceive' whatever it may be, is not the ordinary or any familiar use. For, in that use, it is not only false but simply absurd to say that such objects as pens or cigarettes are never perceived directly[8].

And now just look at Austin's reaction to what has been very often appealed to by the phenomenalist as the "argument from illusion" – the most common example being 'the partly submerged stick in the water' – to the view that what we directly perceive must be different from the object seen.

> "Well now; does the stick" look bent" to begin with? I think that we can agree that it does, we have no better way of describing it. But of course it does *not* look *exactly* like a bent stick, a bent stick out of water at most it may be said to look like a bent stick partly immersed in water. After all, we can't help seeing the water the stick partly immersed in. So exactly what in this case is supposed to be *delusive*? What is wrong, what is even faintly surprising, in the idea of a stick's being straight but looking bent sometimes? Does anyone suppose that if something is straight, then it jolly well has to *look* straight at all times and in all circumstances?[9]

On reading this, I think, it will be agreed upon that to introduce sense data in order to explain such phenomenon is a makeshift solution to an artificial problem. There are no such things as 'sense data' over and above material objects when we perceive the latter and there is simply no class of statements that are incorrigible in the way that sense data statements are supposed to be, and there is no set of statements to serve as a criterion of evidence for them. And last but not least, Austin attacks the assumption of foundationalism in theory of knowledge which the phenomenalist makes in his entire philosophical enterprise. Says Austin.:

"For even if we were to make the very risky and gratuitous assumption that what some particular person knows at some particular place and time could systematically be sorted out into an arrangement of foundations and super-structure, it would be a mistake in principle to suppose that the same thing could be done for knowledge *in general*. And this is because there *could* be no *general* answer to the questions: what is evidence for what, what is certain, what is doubtful, what needs or does not need evidence, can or can't be verified. If the theory of knowledge consists in finding grounds for such an answer, then there is no such thing"[10].

Advaita Vedānata :

I know that K.Srinivas wants to focus his paper on the Argument from illusion employed by Advaitin of Sankarite school to establish that "Brahma Satyam, Jagan Mithya". But I have indulged in discussing phenomenalist's employment of the Argument from illusion at some length just in order to plead for the great care which one needs to take before one rushes in to embrace it as a right kind of ruse for interpretation which Advaitin places on the relationship between Brahman, the alleged Ultimate Reality, and the world of our day—to-day experience – the Jagat. My concern with the Advaitin's stand on this relationship is to look at it solely as a philosophical argument and nothing more. That is why I shall just for the sake of argument, accept whatever K. Srinivas says about the nature of Brahman, although there are number of difficulties in understanding the various descriptions of Brahman – the ultimate reality – stated by K. Srinivas (p.240) on the authority of Upanisads. I shall not even question his respect for the *Upanisads* as belonging to the tradition of infallible literature (p.241) since I believe that questioning the *infallibility* of

Upaniṣads does not in any way conflict with the respect that one may have for that treasure house of spiritual literature. (In fact, I feel that if I have to truly respect them then I must question them and not meekly accept whatever they say.) So, as a prelude to what follows in this short paper, I sketch my plan as : 'lows. First, I shall spell out the argument and my comments on the rope-snake illusion. Second I shall give the description of Brahmanā *la Upaniṣads* but as stated by K. Srinivas. Third, I shall give description of Jagat (world) as conceived by the Advaitin of Sankarite school but again as stated by K. Srinivas. Fourth, I shall discuss the issue as to whether the relationship between Brahman and Jagat can be conceived on the analogy of the relation one can think of between rope and snake in the rope-snake illusion. I shall end my discussion with a few comments on this whole enterprise of a philosopher to search for absolute certainty in getting to know the nature of ultimate reality no matter whether he be a Sankarite Advaitin or a Hegelian Absolutis. In all this presentation, I shall crave the indulgence of my readers to excuse me if I appear to them to be rather rigorous on the points of logic.

A) Rope-Snake Illusion Argument :

1. I perceive snake at T_1 in the corner of the garden

2. I perceive and continue to perceive rope at T_2, T_3, T_4 and so on

3. $T_1 T_2 T_3 T_4 - - T_{n-1}, T_n$ is a time series such that T_2 follows T_1 and T_3 follows T_2 and so on.

4. Thus my experience at T_1 i.e. E_1 of the snake in the corner of the garden is superceded by my experience of the rope: (E_2)

5. I find that the rope that I experience (E_2) at T_2 and subsequent members of the time-series, in the corner of the garden has the features of rope only and hasn't the features of snake.

6. Whenever E_1 is superceded by E_2, E_1 is said to be illusory experience.

   Therefore,

7. My experience of snake at T_1 (i.e. Experience E_1) in the corner of the garden is illusory: and

8. My experience of rope at $T_2, T_3, T_4 \ldots$ (etc.) is that of a real rope and veridical one.

Given this description of the Rope-Snake illusionary perception I shall make the following comments:

i) The illusory experience that I have is my own personal experience and it is beyond all doubt. I cannot be under illusion that I had that illusory experience.

ii) Though it is, like pain experience, a personal and only my own experience. I shall not tender any knowledge-claim about it since I do not know that it is to make a knowledge claim when there is no room for entertaining any doubt about my belief. So I admit that I have illusions in my life of the sort of rope-snake illusion.

iii) It is obvious that this illusion is a perceptual illusion involving role of sense-organs and the entire nervous system as a part of our entire cognitive machinery with which nature has endowed us (or better, our bodies).

iv) I however believe, but can never know, that others from men and possibly animals have illusions. In the case of men, the belief is too strong.

v) There are other types of illusory perceptions, such as hallucinations, dreams, day-dreams, perceptions under hypnotic states etc. These are transitory ones. There are others however to which we are condemned permanently. I mean such illusions as the stationary appearance of the earth on which we live; the moving appearance of the Sun and the Moon; the sizes of Sun and Moon that we see. I see that the earth is flat although I know that earth to round. I may be even deluded into thinking that there's a star in the sky when there is none in reality.

vi) It is important and interesting to note that under normal circumstances all these illusions are not the results of my making them. I do not will to have them. They just happen to me. This is true even if there are glaring efforts in certain fields like film-making and painting that subject people to illusions for producing aesthetic effects on them. Periscopes do not produce illusions but kaleidoscopes do.

Now there are in our times the sciences of physiology, psychology, medicine, physics and astronomy that can offer us very good explanations

as to why these illusory perceptions occur the way they do. No one would however blame Advaitins for having not offered scientific explanations. One however wonders why they were not satisfied with simple naturalistic way of looking at the rope-snake illusion and were inclined to look at it as a mysterious phenomenon. I shall quote what K. Srinivas says about the rope-snake illusion.

> "When we mistake a rope for the snake, there are two different cognitions. First of all, there is a cognition of the snake and this cognition is sublated by a subsequent cognition when we see rope as it is. Then what is the source of illusory snake? Where did it come from? What is the logical relationship between the rope and the snake? Although the locus and the content of snake is the rope, there is no logical relationship between them. Not only that, to look for a relationship, where there is none, results in superimposition of some kind or the other." (p. 241-242)

At another place in his article, he adds:

> As seen in the rope-snake example, when we come to know that the object is really a rope, we believe that the snake no more exists. But what is to be noticed here is that snake did not exist even when we perceived it. This is what is technically called the inexplicable (anirvacaniya). In other words, the snake is a self-contradictory percept that contains its own contradiction." (p. 243)

In the first passage, he raises several questions about the illusory percept of snake, thinking that sine we are talking about it – that we are referring to it, we must commit ourselves ontologically to its existence, its reality in some sense or the other. This is unwanted and unnecessary metaphysical furniture added to the already existing furniture of the universe. But this furniture is not simple. The illusory snake is superimposed on the real rope that is there. Advaitin is not satisfied with the introduction of this new queer entity but failing to see any logical relationship (?) between the two, he introduces the notion of superimposition and says that the illusory object viz. percept of snake is superimposed on the real object that the rope is. This superimposition, he contends, happens because of the Ajñana in the individual who has that illusion. The Naiyāyika explanation that the illusory percept of snake is the result of the perception of a real snake elsewhere by the individual and whose memory he carries

with him and it is that memory impression that has flash on him during the act of perception. The notion of superimposition of illusory (prātibhāsika) object on the real object is picturesque but a concocted one and introduces unwanted elements in our understanding of the said illusion. Indeed Srinivas' surmising, obviously following Advaita Vedantin's line of thinking, that

> "... when we come to know that the object is really a rope, we believe that the snake no more exists. But what is to be noticed here is that the snake did not exist even when we perceived it. This is what is technically called the inexplicable (anirvacaniya). In other words, the snake is a self-contradictory percept that contains its own contradiction". (p. 243),

is incomprehensible and misleading, to say the least. One can understand that expression like "round-square" or "married bachelor" can be self-contradictory in terms of definition and description but one fails to see how an illusory *percept* of snake could be self-contradictory. In the context of description of the rope-snake illusion that I have given above, it is obvious that at T_1 one perceives snake and at T_2 one perceives rope and there is no contradiction in this; leave aside, any other kind of incongruity. There is no *anirvacanīyatā* or inexplicability but to think of it is to create a problem where there is none.

B) Brahman :

Now consider the nature of Brahman according to Srinivas. In order to convey it, we have no means other than language; hence after mentioning several of the mahāvākyas from the Upniṣads, Srinivas says:

> "... ultimately all these descriptions boil down to three important constitutive characteristics of Brahman. They are Pure Being (*sat*), Pure Consciousness *(cit)* and Pure Bliss (*ananda*) :. (p.240)

I certainly do not see how this *boiling down* is to be interpreted but as I said earlier, I shall not question any further the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* conception of Ultimate reality, the Brahman. I don't wish to do any violence to the Concept of Brahman by calling it a dogmatic assumption or by describing such identity claims "All is Brahman" or "I am Brahman" or again "Tattvasmasi" as pseudo-identities. Be that as it may, let us accept for the sake of argument the description of Brahman endorsed by Srinivas as follows: "To put it more succinctly, it is free from *sajātiya-bheda, vijātiya-bheda, and svagata-bheda*." (p. 240).

Now such a Brahman – the ultimate reality cannot be, even by a remote stretch of imagination, be considered to take the place of rope in the rope-snake illusion for the simple reason that while rope is an object of our sensory perception and even if on occasion we may have illusionary perception of snake in its place, that illusion is corrected by us only through sensory perception itself. Nothing more is required by us to correct any illusory perception than more carefully carried out another act of perception, except those cases of illusion to which we are condemned by our constitution and situational predicament in this universe.

C) World :

Regarding the nature of world, the Advaitin, according to Srinivas, takes the stand that "it is world that is conditioned by the categories of space-time relation, causal relations and substance-attribute relations, etc.," (p.245) and immediately raises the question: "But are these categories free from self-contradiction?" (p.243) He further assumes that they are not free from self-contradiction and thus gets to the conclusion that " the world which is held together by these categories should also be self-contradictory." (p.243). This description of the world or Jagat given by the Advaitin is mostly similar to the description of the world given by the Idealists in the West, like Bradley, and others (McTaggart's arguments against the reality of time have made a *niche* in the history of idealism). It might therefore seem that Advaitins are on strong footing. In order to show however that this whole talk about Jagat as being conditioned by the categories mentioned is misconceived one will have to undertake a very very long philosophical exercise. I shall not undertake such an exercise but just focus on the category of causation and be brief. *Firstly*, it is necessary to realize that while it makes perfect good sense to speak of the cause of any event or occurrence and of the existence or non-existence of any object in the world, it makes indeed no sense at all to talk of the cause of world. Category of causation is meaningfully applicable only to the objects or events of our experience. The world about which we speak in philosophical literature is only a logical construct and therefore of a distinct type. To use category of causation in the context of world (which is a totality of facts or things in relations that hold between them) would be a type-mistake. In Kantian phraseology, concept of world is a transcendental illusion and one shouldn't therefore think that we are

ontologically committed to its existence. Secondly, thus if the expression 'world' is not a referential expression, how and where does the question of the world being ever the appearance of some reality – viz., of Brahman, arise at all? It makes sense to make distinction between reality and appearance in respect of rope-snake illusion because the 'illusory snake' and the 'real rope' – both these are exposed to me in my successive perceptions. A situation in which 'x' perceives snake at T_1 and 'y' perceives rope at T_2 won't constitute an illusory perception. In respect of world (taken as appearance) and Brahman (taken as reality) it is impossible to obtain the kind of situation that obtains in the rope-snake illusion. It is therefore difficult to agree with Srinivas when he asserts that "Advaitin too makes use of the argument from illusion, but only to substantiate the view that there is a distinction between "What is the case" and "what appears to be the case". Although the distinction between 'what appears to be the case' and "what is the case" is made to illuminate the distinction between 'world' – an empirical reality which in itself is, as I said, a logical *construct* and 'Brahman' – an ultimate reality that transcends such a logical construct, the rope-snake illusion does not seem to have anything to do with the major issue with which the Advaitin is concerned. This problem, as Srinivas himself puts it, is that; "On the one hand, he (i.e. the Advaitin) has to account for the world of objects (appearances), and on the other hand, he has to establish the view that Brahman (Reality) alone exists." (p.239) This formulation of the problem is not crystal clear to me. Is it that the Advaitin regards each one of the objects that exists in the world an appearance and if so, of what? That each one of the objects that we experience is an appearance, that is to say, every case of our perception of objects is a case of illusory perception, is plainly false. From the fact there are a few cases of illusory perception in *my* life, it does not follow, that all cases of perceptions by all human beings in the world for all times are illusions. One does not have to have lessons in philosophical logic of the Advaitin to see this. May be, Advaitin wants to take the 'world' as a totality of appearances in claiming that the *world* of empirically experienced objects is an appearance. In order to get to the view of ultimate reality in which is grounded this preposterously conceived 'totality of appearances' (the world), which kind of philosophical logic will help me? In the view of Srinivas (and I compliment him for saying this),

"from the above discussion it is clear that there is no other entity excepting Brahman. However, for the critical mind, it is important to show that the teachings of the Upanisads that belong to the tradition of infallible literature do not conflict with the reason or ordinary experience." (pp. 240-41).

D) Further Reflections :

To convince the critical mind, Advaitin uses, not the argument from illusion, but a kind of philosophical logic to unravel the philosophical truth (satya) viz. Brahman alone is real which, according to Srinivas, is worth consideration, and which, according to the footnote 4 (p.247-48), unlike formal logic that operates within the framework of laws of thought, follows from the philosophical presuppositions of a given system or thought to substantiate and justify them. The object of my discussion of the Argument from Illusion was to show that it does not help Advaitin to substantiate the kind of distinction which he wants to make between the *vyāvahārika sattā* and the *pāramārthika sattā* – the one between the empirical world of objects that we experience every now and then, and the Brahman, the Ultimate Reality which if you once attain, does not allow you to have any trace of the empirical world. Who says what and who does what and where, is not much of a consequence here. What is necessary is to spell out the philosophical presuppositions of Advaitin's system and to show, not only how the various positions he takes logically follow from these presuppositions, but also to show that the Advaitin is fully justified in making these presuppositions. Let us therefore forget everything about the argument from illusion and see if there are any good grounds to accept the philosophical logic which Srinivas hints at. And again, last but not least, it is not enough that we make significant move in this direction .... That would prove that the opposing claims about reality are self-contradictory and implausible". (p.241). If Advaitin does this (and I am aware that Sankaracarya did this) it would simply mean that all opponents are wong. But this won't help us much unless the Advaitin insulates his own position against the kind of logic that he employs in demolishing others. This however is a different but, all the same, a difficult task especially when we are living in an age that witnesses the 'The waning of the Light: The Eclipse of Philosophy'.[11]

                                                                      S.V.Bokil

BOOK-REVIEW - I

Jhingran, Saral : *Ethical Relativism and Universalism,*
Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2001, Pp. XIV + 385 Price Rs. 495.00

When contemporary ethical philosophy by and large deals with the nature of practical reasoning, practical problems and their suggested solutions or talks of socio-political virtues or formulates different positions regarding a number of issues which fall under applied ethics, e.g., bio-ethics, environmental ethics, medical ethics etc., Jhingran's defence of universalism against relativism in ethics is a refreshingly interesting work.

In the opening chapter, 'Cultural and Ethical Relativism', Jhingran tries to show how cultural relativists and social anthropologists have argued for ehical relativism and concludes, in the words of Edward Sapir, that 'cultural relativism implies ethical relativism' (p.5). This socio-cultural relativism is also supported by institutionalism which has been upheld by thinkers like Toulmin, Searle, Strawson or Rawls. They claim that particular moralities are relevant to, or can be understood or justified within, certain given social institutions. This chapter seems to be lucid and as faithful an account as possible of the relativist's stand in general. Nevertheless, a couple of points need attention. The opening lines start with the generally understood and accepted Protagorian thesis : 'man is the measure of all things.' Jhingran is of course in good company of thinkers and writers who claim that for Protagoras it is the individual person who is the standard of truth, goodness and law. It is surprising why Protogora's 'man' has been understood as an individual unlike the term 'man' in 'man is mortal'. Secondly, the author herself says (on p. 14-15) that for the relativist 'what is wrong in one society may be right in another' and what bothers her most is that it is not only a factual claim but a normative one. But she does not consider

that in either case the claim is quite modest : The phrase 'it may be right' keeps it open that it may also be wrong. The relativist does not say that it is necessarily so. What is right in one may also be right in another. The claim that Jhingran finds most objectionable is that it is not merely an objective claim but is also a normative claim (p.15). But it is not borne out in the works of those who are at least more moderate. For them it is a methodological claim. The writer, I fear, adopts the *reductio ad absurdum* method all along in her critique of relativism.

Chapter 2, 'Positivism, Postmoderanism and Ethical Relativism' deals with meta.- ethical theories and relate them with positivism, postmodern cognitive relativism and full-blooded ethical relativism. This Chapter indeed shows her deep scholarship and acquaintance with wide expanse of literature available in this area. In this chapter she seeks to reduce what she calls conceptual / cognitive relativism to following assertions :

(a) Our theoretical and empirical knowledge 'is necessarily reduced to or even determined by, our conceptual framework'. This is truer for metaphysical, religious and moral beliefs.

(b) 'This conceptual framework is enshrined in the language of one's society'. Even our descriptive statements differ with differences in the categories and concepts of different languages.

(c) There is a plurality of conceptual frameworks which are not inter-translatable. Subsequently they generate incommunsurable forms of life.

(d) Relativism denies the possibility of common transcultural conceptual frameworks. Hence, we can understand other cultures only by reducing to our own forms of thought.

(e) The access to 'the world' is barred due to one's peculiar conceptual/ linguistic framework. Cognitive relativism rejects representational epistemology and the correspondence theory of truth.

(f) It rejects all forms of foundationalism whether in empiricism or rationalism

(g) Hence, no possibility of comparative judgements concerning different versions of the world or forms of life.

(h) The truth or falsity of a given belief or practice or its justification is possible only from an internalist point of view (pp. 65-66).

She holds that post-modermists accept a number of such theses like diversity of cultures and their conceptual frameworks, dependence of our beliefs and norms on our culture, cultural relativism or the absence of any cross-cultural standard with reference to which various cultures can be criticized or evaluated. This is a strong denial of a common matrix or an over arching framework under which incommunsurable frameworks can be assimilated. She holds that such a position leads to meta-ethical relativism. She laments that the communication bias in Rorty, Mac Intyre or in Gadamar also leads to ethical relativism (p.68).

Many of the points she makes are true of ethical relativists but there are views which are debatable. On p.34 she says that along with Moore's, Hare's theory is both meta-ethical as well as normative. It is true of Moore but not of Hare. Later, (p.68) she seeks to interpret Hare's universalisalbility thesis as supporting universal morality. But Hare's methodological (or logical) approach can also be accepted by the ethical relativist without inconsistency. She wrongly asserts that modern thought is against universalist claim of morality or religion. It is true of Hume but what about Kant ? She accuses Kant of individualism by misquoting him : "Treat everyone as an end and never as a means" (p.40). What Kant says is that never treat any person simply as a means. She also laments that modern thought has never been able to overcome the conflict between freedom and equality, rather it sharpens it (p.41) I wonder what she would say of men like Kant, Sidgwck or Mill ?

She further asserts that the concept of 'paradigm' has completely destroyed the possibility of any objective truth. But being relative to a paradigm does not rule out objectivity within a particular universe of discourse. I am using the term objective which has been mostly not discussed. Jhingran is more interested in asserting the unavoidability of universal truths in ethics which surely does not find much favour-at least not in the rigorous sense demanded by the author. But even 'universality' in the sense of universalisability (with certain conditions which can be accommodated even within Knatian approach) is not completely ruled out by moderate relativists among post-modernists. Is n't it that If A is morally right for a person, it is also morally right for all persons' has an implicit rider that all the relevant circumstances must be same or at least similar. A lot of discussion on this point has taken place - specially since the publication

of Hare's *Language of Morals* and there are not many who are ready to buy unrestricted universality. Jhingran herself (p.61f) admits the possibility of a milder version of post-modernist relativism. Men like Kuhn, Doppelt, Bernstein, Rorty and others are quite amenable and accommodating but, as we will see, Jhingran is not satistfied with such an alternative.

The next two chapters which are a comprehensive critique of cultural - ethical relativsm (Ch.3) and that of positivism and post-modernist relativism are painstaking elaboration of what has been said in the preceding chapter. Her general observations about cultures and interaction among them by and large come closer to moderate relativism and yet she affirms that every group considers its own beliefs and values are the best (p.80). This dogmatism is not endemic to philosophical relativism though it is an undeniable fact which must be fought against by every rational being. But the author cannot score a point against relativism on this assumption. In her unguarded moments Jhingran sometimes says conflicting things. On p.81 she says that cultural relativists advocate incommensurality such that 'no communication is possible between them'. But she also observers, 'when the modern anthropologists and sociologists assert the integral nature of each culture and some form of internalism... They do not intend this to mean the total incommensurability of various cultures'. And then follows what is flattering to relativism : 'They simply want to express a positive celebration of plurality and diversity, as also the value of universal tolerance'. She approvingly quotes Ralph Mnnhein who makes an over-statement when he says that philosophical relativism 'denies the validity of any standards and of the existence of order in the world'. (p.84) She makes a logically correct point that 'what is right' is not identical with 'what is believed to be right'. The converse is also true : 'what is believed to be right' is not identical with 'what is right'. Here one is reminded of some recent debate concerning 'knowledge' and 'belief' arising out of Gettier's paper. But for a sociologist or a cultural anthropologist there is no other way to know what people consider to be right except observing what is believed to be right. And if he honestly holds that 'X is right' he must *believe* that 'X is right' though later he may change his view. In the same manner if someone sincerely say 'X is true' he must believe that 'X is true' though X may be false. But this is a point concerning moral epistemology - not cultural anthropology or sociology. On pp. 107-8 the author asserts that partly morality

is culture - based and partly intercultural. Hence, there should be no impossibility of any cross-cultural criteria even though no necessity is involved here. On p. 110 she admits that the fact of 'situational meanings' in the context of certain cultures shows that their values may differ. Of course, values are inalienable part of any culture and different cultures do differ in significant ways with regard to their value systems without at the same time precluding striking similarities and even sameness in some cases. That there are some basic principles in every society or culture is undeniable (112) but to insist on Knatian categorical imperative-like injunction is only to insist on a vacuous principle like 'one ought to do one's duty' or 'one should be a morally good person'. She is quite harsh on relativists when she attributes to them the view that they tend to make their society or culture a 'windowless monad' (p. 117). The *reductio ad absurdum* method does not work. Sometimes the author makes a point in defence of her own position and soon after praises her opponents. On p.118 she says that relativism does not entail tolerance and hastens to say in the following paragraph that relativism's talk of the equal validity of all norms and values tends to encourage an attitude of tolerance and even benevolence for others'. What she wants to say is that though it may lead to tolerance, it is not logically necessary. But as a meta - ethical theory it does favour tolerance, since incommensurability thesis does not imply intolerance. However, is Kant's theory not intolerant of utilitarianism ? Jhingran, in her critique of post-modern relativism often talks of incommensurability and alternate it with translatability (p. 132). But those who advocate it generally have in mind exact or complete translatability which is relevant in logic. In human world or morals it is too exacting a demand which only some philosophers like Hillary Putnam would make as opposed to Nelson Goodman. In poetry people are aware of the difficulties sin translation. Instead, why has the author not considered Gadamar's concept of horizon and 'fusion of horizons' which can bring about a sort of inter-cultural awareness and appreciation based on interpretive / hermeunitical understanding.

The author has devoted one section (4.4) on the question of translatability / untranslatability and holds with Putnam and others (p. 139) that there is always a definite common observational core to all perceptions and beliefs which anchors translation from one language to others. But it is not the question of truth or falsity which is involved here but it is the felicity

of translation which is the relevant point. Besides, the translatability is at issue concerning sentences and not propositions. Kuhn appears to be misunderstood when Jhingran seems to imply that two theories are always incommensurable. Two different life-worlds need not always be completely incommensurable. She herself accepts (p.147) Bernstein's defence of Kuhn that 'there in no common framework of neutral language which exists over and above all other languages'. She also grants that 'by the very nature of things every language and conceptual framework belongs to some one culture or the other, some historical period or the other.'

She unnecessarily criticizes Winch and Taylor (p.155) by suggesting that they talk of not judging primitive cultures from 'our standards of rationality' since the point of 'their activities is very different from those of modern western cultures'. Surely, it is not their rationality which is denied but it is a plea that the justification or explanation of their acts are based on different belief-systems and assumptions. The author somehow does not consider the feasibility of a position like one upheld by Bernard Williams in his work *Ethics and Limits of Philosophy*. For Williams, unlike formalist approach, one should take more account of the contextual factors by which we make sense of our day-to-day lives as moral agents. There are liberal thinkers who reject the prescriptive appeal to universal values or abstract principles bound up with the Enlightenment discourse.

In Chapter 5, in which she focuses on realism and universalism, she mainly moves within Kantian paradigm and interprets Kant more stridently than, perhaps, Kant himself. She says, "if any laws or norms are culturally conditioned, or derived from experience or history or anthropology, they do not deserve to be categorized as moral (p.182). But, is it necessary for all laws to be completely independent of human nature, society or history ? She rightly holds that Kant did not allow exceptions to moral principles (p.183). But is n't it true of Kant that he admitted exceptions *within* a rule? Again, she misreads Kant when she states Kants' second formulation (p.183) of the catgorical imperative the way she has done earlier (p.40) i.e. 'treat humanity in every person *as an end-in-itself*, and never as a means'. Jhingran forgets the all-important qualifying word 'only'. Singer is most likely right when he tries to interpret Kant as only holding not that wrong actions are not always unconditionally so but that they are generally so. There is one more point which is admitted by Kant or Hare or other

'universalists', but not fully appreciated by Jhingran, that a moral duty is true of all if there are relevant similarities in the given case. Further, she claims (p.195) that we perceive objective moral facts the way we do perceive physical facts. But, as a matter of fact, we need a moral framework to do so. And it is not universally present. What made a handful of politicians celebrate the mayhem and pogrom during last years' holocaust as something to be proud of or when some depraved person condoned it as something which has been normally happening in our country creates doubt concerning the so-called perception of moral facts. On p.197 she asserts that 'the objectivity of moral properties present an important counter to ethical relativism'. But, as earlier stated, relativists need not necessarily deny objectivity. With reference to any given situation, context or a way of life, moral judgements can be objective if it is not made contingent upon some personal whims or desires. The author often tries to equate relativism with subjectivism obliterating a line that can always be drawn between them. Indeed relativism is contrary to absolutism (even foundationalism). It can co-exist with qualified universalizability as that Kant, Hare or Singer and is also consistent with objectivity. While making this assertion I have in mind the views of some post-modernists like Habermans and Gadamer. In her attempt to strengthen her anti-relativist stance she also seeks support from realism to which she ascribes the view that 'moral principles would be true or valid even if no one affirmed them.' It seems that she is equating moral principles with mathematical propositions. Besides, it sounds a bit unusual to speak of moral principles as true/valid without any qualification.

The Chapter on The Moral Point of View (Ch.6) is more or less reservation of the main points made in preceding chapters but there are some inconsistencies which occur in her attempt to make some concessions to relativism. Making two counter-theses to relativism, she says that 'not all social norms and patterns of behaviour are morality proper'. Hence they are morally irrelevant. Her second point is that while some are morally neutral, many others are not and they are morally evaluated. Then she hastens to add in the very next sentence (p.202) that all social practices are potentially objects of moral evaluation'. She herself approvingly refers to Baier's position concerning universality and culture-specificity of norms and moral point of view (p.203). It is not necessary either from relativists' or her own point of view that separate or diverse moral codes should be,

as she holds, contradictory or incommensurable (p.206). At some places it appears that the author confuses individual approval with cultural/social determinants of norms (pp. 211-12). In her discussions she often plays Knat against relativism and sometimes Hare and Singer anainst Kants' absolutist ethics' (p.214). The author of course rightly pleads with Baier, Strawson, Singer and others for formal characteristics like overridingnes, rationality, objectivity or universality. Many a relativist do not deny this but maintain that these cannot adequately guide us to morality since these are too general and vacuous. The author herself admits that 'even rationality would be value-neutral and vacuous unless conceived in the context of day-to-day life' (p.238). That is the reason why many post-modervists try to locate ethical discourse within Aristotelian paradigm of practical wisdom and reasoning (like Mac Intyre and others).

During her discussions on self and others (Ch.7) she interprets Sartre in a manner which sometimes goes against what Sartre was trying to say. For example, Jhingran suggest that for Santre solitariness of man is as important as authenticity. On the contrary, for Sarte solitariness, is a bane and not a boon. His assessment of the 'other', as depicted in his fiction and plays, reveals man's state of bad faith whereas authenticity is something man ought to achieve. It is a normative concept. Solitariness belongs to the realm of facticity while authenticity belongs to the realm of transcendence.

To conclude, I fear the review has become longish but I would like to submit that it is the recognition of a very scholarly and comprehensive account of various issues and problems related to the ever-lasting debate between relativism and non-relativism in ethics. Jhigran has gone into almost all available classical and contemporary sources and it will be of great interest to all academicians with special interest in ethics. The detailed bibliography would be a great help to all the students and researchers in this area. Author's presentation is remarkably lucid though at times she has been repetitive. It will indeed be valuable addition to every personal and institutional library.

S. A. SHAIDA

BOOK-REVIEW : II

Saral Jhingran, *Ethical Relativism and Universalism,* Motilal Banarsidass
Publishers (P) Ltd. First Indian Edition 2001,   PP.-385, Price Rs. 495/-

The book *Ethical Relativism and Universalism* critically examines
a controversy between relativistic and universalistic positions over the
nature of morality. Ethical relativism is a thesis hich argues that morality is
culture-centric, i.e., ethical judgments can be validated only within the
culturally drawn parameters. Universalism, on the other hand, holds that
morality is inherently universal, i.e., it is governed by certain axiomatic
principles which are valid across cultures.

Jhingran defends a universalistic position but at the same time
acknowledges the fact of cultural diversity. She proposes a theory which
consists of certain formal-cum-substantive features which are the
conditions of universal morality. The theory rests on the rationalistic
foundation, in the sense, that reason or rational argumentation is considered
the ground of a moral discourse. However, the rational structure of morality
never claims any final word about morality, rather, leaves it open for a
further cross – cultural dialogue.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first two chapters of
the book, namely "Cultural and Ethical Relativism" and "Positivism, Post-
modernism and Ethical Relativism" trace the roots of ethical relativism
both in the modern and post-modern periods. The presentation here is
largely descriptive.

Ethical relativism, Jhingran argues, is very strongly defended on the
basis of *cultural and conceptual relativism*. The underlying thought is
that since human understanding is delimited by historical, socio-cultural

matrices, the issue of morality also finds justification only when it is treated as an 'internal question' – to be sorted out within the cultural boundaries. Cultural or conceptual relativism advocate cultural diversity so the issue of morality is denied of any universal standards which can adjudicate between conflicting positions.

Empiricism also consolidates ethical relativism. It attacks the rationalistic conception of universal innate ideas. On the same principle, it argues that morality cannot rest upon certain universal values. Moral codes of conduct are, instead, learnt within the social parameters.

Institutionalism, promoted by thinkers like Toulmine, Searle, Strawson, Rawls etc. is yet another support to ethical relativism. It advocates that moral codes necessarily refer to the needs of the specific institutional structure of a given society, i.e., a moral behaviour is a response to the needs of the institutions of a given society.

Another line of support comes from the utilitarianist camp. Richard R. Brandt draws our attention to the practical aspect of morality. He says that even the Ten Commandments, which appear to be simple and universally applicable, presuppose a specific, local, institutional or cultural background; for, a universal abstract moral principle cannot help us taking any moral decision. Then there are anthropological – sociological research findings which conclude that every action or behaviour finds meaning within the culturally fabricated system. A culture is a 'whole' – an ethos, a *weltanschauung* which determines the way of life for a particular society. So what is right or wrong is determined by what is believed to be the case in a society.

The author then discusses post-modernism which endorses ethical relativism in a strong way. Post-modernism, which lacks in fixed ideologies, is a revolt against the modern logocentricism. It replaces the rationalistic model of the *Cogito* with the conceptual schemata. The identity of an individual as a fixed, autonomous, undeterred consciousness is now considered as constantly shaped by the historical consciousness. Post-modern thinkers like Rorty, MacIntyre, Gadamer etc. all place the individual within the community as largely 'other-determined'.

The Post-modern scheme-content distinction flares up the thesis of incommensurability which accentuates cultural diversity and outrightly

rejects any over-arching moral framework which can commensurate between conflicting ethical standards.

The author here also takes note of the post-modernist trends in scientific discourse. Thinkers like Quine, Kuhn, Feyeraband and Lakatos have attacked the 'Certesian Anxiety' and reformulated the goals of scientific practice. Science, for them, is a practice governed by historical paradigms and not bound to comply with any universal standards. The same thinking runs through the ethical discourse. As a result, morality is denied of any cross cultural standards.

Having elucidated various theses which support ethical relativism, Jhingran, in the third chapter, "Cultural-Ethical Relativism: A Critique" challenges the view that the empirical fact of cultural or conceptual diversity entails ethical relativism. She argues:

(i) Firstly, that cultural diversity is purely a descriptive thesis. And what we usually find in the name of cultural diversity are a moral issues like social etiquettes, interpersonal behaviour etc. rather than the fixed "moral codes". So, the fact of cultural diversity is not enough to identify distinctive moralities.

(ii) Secondly, that the cultural diversity does not imply the absence of cross-cultural validity of moral standards. Human thoughts are not sealed within the conceptual frameworks. Ideologies like Marxism and religions like Islam, Jhingran argues, have rejected the social or national boundaries and have flourished far and wide. In her words, "no culture can thrive in a vacuum, it is in constant interaction with other cultures and cannot remain uninfluenced by that interaction" (P. 79). So, in the absence of fixed socio-cultural boundaries the claim that an action is right or wrong because of its origin in the agent's society cannot be defended.

(iii) Thirdly, that the cultural diversity does not mean incommensurability. Following Kuhn and Davidson, who have believed in the universality of certain features despite talking about cultural diversity, Jhingran argues that in order to be incommensurable different standpoints must refer to the same thing. She says that the practice of patricide, for example, is viewed by the Romans as an abhorring act while the Eskimos silently endorse it. They are culturally two different

perspectives yet they refer to one and the same thing – the act of killing one's father which by itself is capable of determining our moral judgment.

Having criticized ethical – cultural relativism, the author in the fourth chapter "Relativism: Positivism and Post-Modernism: A Critique" questions the credibility of positivistic and post-modern thinking in establishing ethical relativism. She strongly contests the positivistic view that "The 'ought' of morality can be derived from the 'is' of anthropology and sociology" (P. 161). The empirical – scientific method, she argues cannot be the ultimate court of appeal for every discourse. Regarding post-modernism, she claims that the theses of incommensurability and untranslatability cannot circumscribe morality to distinct conceptual frameworks. She further argues that relativism is a self-contradictory thesis for the reason that the validity of relativism presupposes universality.

Jhingran adopts an anti-relativistic stance and proposes a theory of universal morality. She defends her thesis on the basis of moral realism. In chapter five ' Realism and Universalism, She discusses both mild realism supported by Hilary Putnum and Miachel Dummett and hard core realism advocated by Miachel Devitt and C. A. Hooker. Realism asserts that the world is independent of the mind and is known to us through the causal relationship. Moral realism, in the same way, believes that a moral judgment refers to the moral properties of acts, persons and states of affairs regardless of various opinions. That is to say that the presence of cognitive contents in a moral assertion remains unaffected by the subjective beliefs and feelings. The epistemic element assigns it objectivity and like other declarative statements a moral judgment also has a truth value.

Jhingran favours the position of mild realism, which according to her, takes care of both imperative and realistic standpoints. The objectivity (due to cognitivity) of a moral judgment not only makes it universally valid (though no one asserts it) but also assigns it a normative value. 'Burning a cat', for example, the author says, is inherently cruel and unethical irrespective of different viewpoints.So rightness or wrongness is due to the inherent nature of an act or a state of affairs which is independent of the cultural beliefs and emotions. In her words, " We call the act of burning the cat an evil act because there is something in the nature of the act itself which makes it morally wrong or evil, and not simply because we feel

some emotion, sentiment, or attitude towards that act". (P. 175). Having accepted cognitivism in ethics. The author promotes ethical universalism along the Kantian conception of morality. In chapter six "The moral point of view", she presents an axiomatic structure of morality but, at the same time, she distances herself from the Kantian scheme of transcendental morality. She rather speaks of the axiomatic structure in the sense of trans-cultural validity which, at the same time, does not negate pluralism of morality.

At this juncture, Jhingran draws our attention to an important distinction which has been generally overlooked. She says that a line of distinction between moral claims and social customs has not been maintained and the fusion of these two promotes ethical relativism. In her view, we must take note of two things:

(i) First, not all social norms and patterns of behaviour are morally proper.

(ii) Second, though many social practices are morally neutral many others are not so and should be judged from the moral standpoint.

What the author emphasizes here is that it is not necessary that every social phenomenon should be viewed from a moral point of view, however, when a social phenomenon is understood from different standpoints – be anthropological, sociological, historical or moral then the moral claim is superior to all. It has an 'overriding' claim; for it is above the individual interests. Jhingran calls this the 'moral point of view' which differs from the generally understood sense of morality. The moral point of view has an overriding claim because it gives us standards to judge acts and traits as well as different moral codes and institutions.

The moral point of view or universal morality consists of certain formal and substantive features. The formal characteristics (which later Jhingran calls 'semi-formal') are (i) overridingness (ii) universality (iii) rationality and (iv) objectivity. They provide a common framework within which a moral discourse can be carried out cross-culturally.

Regarding substantive principles, the author puts forth a list of four principles which supply reasons for a moral decisions and judgements. These principles are (i) reversibility (ii) impartiality (iii) equality & (iv) justice. Further, Jhingran boils down the formal and substantive features

into four elementary and foundational principles, namely *equality*, *justice*, *truth* and *ahimsa*. The author accepts that the list is not exhaustive but certainly these principles are a priori and axiomatic because they do not need any further justification and they also provide the basis for cross-cultural discussion on moral principles.

At this point, the author discusses another problem relevant to the concept of morality in chapter seven "self and others". Two important questions in this respect are (i) whether morality concerns regulating interpersonal behaviour or (ii) the moral agent is a person in her own right. The author here takes a chance to deal with the controversy between the communitarians and liberals over these issues.

Focusing on the central point of the debate the author argues that a moral context involves both the self and others on the basis of the Kantian and Indian Moral perspectives. What is important in these two perspectives are the notions of "good will" and the "purity of self" respectively. They stress the individual's motives or frame of mind which makes a moral agent true to himself and prevents him from succumbing to moral vices. Jhingran's argument here is that since morality involves both the self and others, at the deeper level, the moral principles also claim universal validity where distinct contextualities look insignificant. She speaks of principles like impartiality, reversibility and justice which are above the culture specific conditions and are universally true.

In the final chapter "A Rational Approach to Universal Morality" She discusses about the foundations of universal morality. She argues that neither the community nor the individual can be the basis of morality. Reason alone provides the ultimate ground to morality. By rational character of morality, she means that the truth-claim of a moral judgment (due to cognitivity) is a claim to reasonableness, a claim to rational justification. In other words, when different people argue in clear and reasonable manner they are likely to appeal to the same moral judgment. Nevertheless, consensus is not a proof but still an *indication* of the greater possibility of the rightness of a moral judgment. Since consensus also leads to relativism, Jhingran chooses 'reason' as the ultimate basis of morality.

The author here derives inspiration from Montefiore's three-fold distinction between analytic, synthetic and ethical statements which are validated or falsified in distinct manners. Analytic statements refer to the

rules of language, synthetic statements depend upon the matters of fact but a moral assertion can be validated or falsified only by giving reasons in favour or against it.

Jhingran endorses Montefiore's distinctions but while making reason the final arbiter she pays due regards to factual reality in moral matters. She does not posit 'reason' in the transcendental realm but in the empirical contingent world. That is why she never claims that moral assertions are infallible. Rather reason here implies a possibility of a rational dialogue above our cultural prejudices. Complying with the continental thinkers like Gadamer and Habermas, she argues that a dialogue is a ceaseless process in which the participants shed off their prejudgements and arrive at a minimum universal agreement.

So a moral discourse is an open discourse where the ethical reasoning, with its exploratory and multi- dimensional structure, allows people to enter into a constructive and critical dialogue towards consensus.

The theory of rationality upon which Jhingran has founded her theory of morality locates reason in the communicative essence of mankind. It takes a middle path between the Kantian transcendental schemata and the relativistic position of distinct moralities. The possibility of a rational dialogue does not negate the fact of cultural diversity but allows them to enter into a constructive interaction to attain minimum universality. So, Jhingran's schemata of universal morality charts out a middle course between ethical relativism and ethical absolutism.

The book examines the issue of morality in a very broad perspective and is highly exhaustive in descriptive contents. The in-depth understanding of the subject and critical presentation that it provides will certainly generate further discussions within the philosophical circles.

ANUPAM YADAV

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BOOK-REVIEW : III

Kaushal, Radhey Shyam : *Structural Analogies in Understanding Nature,* Anamaya Publishers, New Delhi, 2003; paperback, pp i - xix, plus 1 - 194.

This is a book written by a physicist philosophar discussing the role of models and metaphors, or as the author calls them, structural analogies, in understanding Nature. A structural analogy is an analogy which originates "basically from the structure or construction as such" (p. 1). The synonyms of structural analogy are models, symmetry, simile, metaphor, proverb, or a quotation. According to Radhey Shyam Kaushal, all these "turn out to be the special cases of the generalized concept of structural analogy" (p. 14), or similarity of structure.

In this work, Kaushal builds a "p[hilosophical combined with atomic type of model, called 'the patomic model' with a view to understanding the inner, spiritual, world of man while the outer world is studied by the sciences. He believes that his patomic model of man had applications in both the soft and the hard diciplines of knowledge, including e.g., mathematics and physics, philosophy and literarture, social and biological sciences, or what you will.

Kaushal's patomic model is built on the lines of Bohr's atomic model of matter; and it seeks to arrange systematically "the essences of life responsible for the human action and behaviour" (p. 158). The essences of life, as he enumerates, include the world of objects, the biological body, the senses, action and behaviour, mind, intellect, ego, the soul, and above all God, the different levels of consciousness and the various forms of mystic (yogic) meditation. One cardinal assumption of his model is that "the space and time... are basically the manifestations of consciousness of the being b" (p.159) The being b can be any sentient being, any form of

consciousness, from the speck of space and moments of time through earth worms and human beings to the divine being, a God. Further, Kaushal tells us that the contents of his patomic model are inspired by "the spirit of Vedāntic Philosophy" (p. 158). He does not specify which Vedāntic philosophy. I understand he means the advaitic type of Vedāntic philosophy wedded to the Sāṁnkhya tradition.

Kaushal is convinced that it is through structural analogies that we learn about the world out there as also about the inner world of our own psychological and spiritual nature. Towards the end of the book (pp. 149 - 153), he asks the question : "Can structural analogies lead to ultimate truth?" A part of his answer is that "analogies exist only within a set of assumptions" (p. 120). Knowledge of truth or ultimate reality comes from direct confrontation with reality, not through the mediacy of assumptions which, because of the human finitude and limitations, underly all structural analogies. Therefore, it is not through analogies that one knows or reaches the ultimate truth.

The other part of his answer to the question is this : "As far as the search of ultimate truth is concerned it remains a matter of realization only and perhaps much beyond the language of analogies and that too for a "man of perfection" only." If you ask Kaushal, who is the man of perfection ? His answer is, "A Yogi". He writes : "A Yogi - the man of perfection - commands over both inner and outer worlds" (p.2). The ordinary human mortals are not yogis or perfect men; "they depend on structural analogies for gaining knowledge and understanding of both the worlds, the inner and the outer" (p. 2). The true yogi transcends analogies.

I do not quite agree with Kaushal on many assumptions he makes in building the patomic model and in demonstrating its utility as an instrument of extension of knowledge in the sciences. I disagree with him on, for example, that philosophy is on a par with the objective sciences like physics and mathematics. Even within his patomic model, philosophy cannot be equated with the objective sciences. Consider his patomic model. The model is based on the Vedāntic conception of man and the world. But, the Vedāntic conception is not the only conception, it is one of the many conceptions, available to us in the history of philosophy. Why should Kaushal reject the other alternatives and set his heart on the Vedāntic conception only ?

I should have no quarrel with him if he uses the Vedāntic philosophy as the source of giving substance to his patomic model. But then his choice of this and not any other philosophy of man and the world need to be justified. Kaushal provides no justification for his choice. What he does goes only to mar his argument. He simply asserts that the Vedānitic philosophy is "known for its perfection and not bound by space and time" (p. 3). But, this won't do. I would call this characteristic a dogmatically subjective feature of his patomic model of man . If I am right in my thinking, this dogmatically subjective feature makes the patomic model fall outside the tract of the hard-core scientists' preferred choice of models to use them as effective instruments of extending our understanding of man and the world.

All said, Kaushal's *Structural Analogies in Understanding Nature* is an interesting piece of academic research work. It is a well produced book, there are several misprints of Romanized Sanskrit expressions, though. It is a welcome addition to any good library.

V.K.BHARADWAJA

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